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OR,

THE SEAT OF BENEVOLENCE.

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THE RUNAWAY;

OR,

THE SEAT OF BENEVOLENCE.

A NOVEL.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY MR. SMITH.

Somers, whom misfortunes had humbled till fate could not awe nor death difmay, ftood calm as a Chriftian in the crafh of worlds.

VOL. II.

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1800.

THE RUNAWAY;

OR,

THE SEAT OF BENEVOLENCE.

CHAP. I.

ON the enſuing day, after breakfaſt, Auguſta being alone with her father, requeſted permiſſion that ſhe might be allowed to ſpend the reſidue of the day with Clariſſa, and that he would not mention to any perſon where ſhe was gone, as ſhe wiſhed to have ſome converſation with her without interruption.

To this requeſt Sir Charles aſſented.

Augusta left the house unobserved by Edward, and shortly reached the cottage, where she found Clarissa employed in domestic offices and attending upon Mrs. Bentley.

They had scarcely been together an hour before Freeman was observed entering the garden gate.

Augusta requested of Clarissa, that she would convey her where Freeman should not have an opportunity of seeing her. "I will go up stairs," said she to Mrs. Bentley, "and stay with her till he has left the place." But this was impracticable, as she must have passed the door to have ascended the stairs, and as it stood open Freeman could not avoid seeing her. "Convey me any-where," continued

Augusta,

Augusta, "it matters not to what place, for if my cousin should know that I am here, he will mention it on his return, and I shall probably be troubled with Theodore's company, which (for particular reasons that I will hereafter state) I wish to avoid."

Clarissa had scarcely time to conduct her into a small pantry adjoining, and to shut the door, before Freeman entered the cottage.

"I took the liberty," said Freeman, "to wait on you for the purpose of enquiring concerning your health. I hope you sustained no injury last night, by walking through the dew?"

Clariſſa thanked him, and aſſured him ſhe had not.

"It gives me great pleaſure," ſaid Freeman, "to meet you here alone, as I have an affair to communicate to you, that nearly concerns my future peace of mind."

Clariſſa conſidered that Auguſta was within hearing; and did not think it prudent he ſhould betray his ſecrets to a third perſon, without his being appriſed of it, as ſhe conceived ſuch a conduct would be ungenerous.

"You never could have come at a more unfavourable opportunity," reſumed ſhe, "as at this time I am under the neceſſity

ceſſity of attending on Mrs. Bentley; and, unleſs it is an affair of that importance which cannot be delayed, I will thank you to call at a more convenient period."

"I am extremely ſorry," replied Freeman, "that I have been ſo unfortunate, as I wiſhed to have had a long converſation with you; but as it is, I will content myſelf by ſaying a few words which will not detain you more than five minutes, and ſhall therefore without any preface declare to you, that the firſt moment I beheld you in the poſſeſſion of Mrs. Gripe, I felt a ſentiment of affection for you. When I viſited you here in the morning, and beheld you differently attired, I felt convinced that you would grace a higher circle.

"During

"During the whole of the day that I had the happineſs to ſpend in your company you ſhone with ſuperior luſtre, and I had the pleaſure to find that my attachment to your perſon was increaſed by the accompliſhments of your mind.

"I wiſh to deal candidly with you; therefore, to ſum up all I have to ſay in a few words, I love you with ſincerity, and ſhall eſteem it the greateſt happineſs of my life to call you honourably mine."

Clariſſa was conſiderably agitated and confuſed on the receipt of this declaration.

As ſoon as ſhe could compel her tongue to articulate a reply: "Is it poſſible," ſaid ſhe, "that you, ſir, who ſo generouſly

rously interfered to preserve me, should be the first to attempt at destroying my character?

"How mean and contemptible must I appear in the eyes of your uncle!—How much beneath the notice of Miss Freeman should I reduce myself, by listening to your addresses!—No, sir, highly as I esteem you for the generous protection you afforded me, I cannot so far degrade myself.

"I am well aware of the subordinate situation my misfortunes have placed me in;—exclusive of this, you must pardon me when I say, that your professions to me at a time when you are paying your serious addresses to Miss Freeman, is an insult which I did not expect from you, and which I flatter myself my conduct has not merited."

"My dear Miſs Leſley," reſumed Freeman, "you wound me in the tendereſt point.

"I am not paying my addreſſes to my couſin; I know that my uncle, who wiſhes it, has circulated ſuch a report, but it is far from being the fact.

"I eſteem Auguſta as my relation; I eſteem her for the many valuable ſentiments ſhe poſſeſſes; but I feel not that affection for her which it would be neceſſary for me to inherit, provided I intended to paſs my life with her.

"The ſame ſentiment is poſſeſſed by her towards me, which I was able to learn from a candid explanation that took place between us ſome time back. With reſpect to the ſubordinate ſituation you are placed in, I cannot ſee it in the ſame light as you do.

"You

"You are equally defcended (if not fuperior) to myfelf.

"You have received a liberal education that will render you an ornament to whatever fociety you may be introduced.

"Am I then to forfeit my hopes of happinefs, becaufe you lack of a few paltry thoufands?"

"Mr. Freeman," replied Clariffa, "I fhould efteem myfelf ungrateful after the fervices you have rendered me, if I did not attend to whatever you may advance, and reply with candour. This I hope will plead my apology for further enduring it. My misfortunes have placed an infurmountable barrier between us. I am a wretched orphan, a child of charity, and a cottager:—What would your uncle fay to fuch a choice as this?

"You have a father—What would his ſentiments be? and what opinion would the world in general form of ſuch an union?

"Theſe are circumſtances I am confident you have not duly conſidered, or you could not (conſiſtent with the attachment you profeſs) wiſh to introduce me into ſo mortifying, ſo very humiliating a ſituation. —Indeed it cannot be."

"Hold," cried Freeman, "and do not too raſhly decide.—My uncle's opinion would be the ſame if I married a fortune ſuperior to my own: he would think of nothing but the diſappointment he would experience, in not being able to execute his favourite plan.

"I have a father——Happy reflection! —He is indeed a father!—He poſſeſſes every valuable ſentiment that can orna-

ment

ment human nature, and would be proud to find he had a ſon who could diſtinguiſh merit, and deſpiſe every mercenary motive in the choice of happineſs.

"As to what the world may ſay, the better part of ſociety would have the ſame ſentiments as my father; and what the worſt part might advance is infinitely beneath either your notice or mine.

"All this, therefore, I conſider as nothing.

"Can you feel for a plain man, like myſelf, a ſpark of that attachment which would be neceſſary to enſure our future happineſs?"

"I have promiſed," replied Clariſſa, "to anſwer you with candour, and therefore muſt avoid your laſt queſtion.—But, for a moment, I will ſuppoſe I poſſeſſed

the ſame ſentiment which you profeſs; for without that I ſhould never think of entering into the marriage ſtate.

"I ſhall admit likewiſe, that your father poſſeſſes every requiſite affection of a parent towards a child.—This would lead him to overlook the impropriety of your conduct.—But, what muſt be his ſentiments reſpecting me?—He would imagine I had endeavoured to trepan your affections for the purpoſe of ſharing your fortune. This would make him look upon me in a contemptible light; and, however he might be inclined through his paternal regard for you to admit your viſits to his houſe, yet, conſiſtent with the opinion he entertained, he never would admit me."

"Good Heaven!" exclaimed Freeman,

"the

"the bare idea of ſuch a conduct is ſhocking to human nature.—How wrongly do you eſtimate pure paternal regard!

"It is plain you never knew a father. —Such a conduct in him would be no more than ſelf-love; he would only conſult his own happineſs by ſeeing me—— But it is a mockery of all tenderneſs and affection to ſuppoſe he would not equally conſult mine.

"Is it poſſible that a parent can eſteem his child, and at the ſame time treat its partner with contempt, and ſhut his doors againſt her?

"If you recollect, I told you my father poſſeſſed every valuable ſentiment that could ornament human nature.—Can he poſſeſs theſe and act in the manner you deſcribe?

"As to his harbouring ſo mean an idea that

fortune was your inducement, what muſt then be his opinion concerning me? —My inducement is pure affection.

"My father would ſcorn to harbour ſo narrow and contemptible an opinion. It would, indeed, be a ſingular doctrine to maintain that every perſon who is deprived of fortune muſt likewiſe be deſtitute or incapable of affection, and dead to every ſentiment of love!"

"You foil me," reſumed Clariſſa, "in every argument; I muſt therefore requeſt you to ſay no more upon the ſubject; beſide which, I am particularly engaged at this time.—You promiſed to detain me but five minutes, and twice that period has elapſed."

"Would you," ſaid he, "ſend me hence without one word in my favour? —Believe me, I cannot eaſily relinquiſh the

fond hope I had entertained of calling you mine."

"Mr. Freeman," replied ſhe, "if I did not eſteem you above all others, I ſhould be the moſt ungrateful creature in exiſtence; but to promiſe what I have not conſidered of—I cannot.

"Some other time I will ſtate my objections more at large; at preſent you muſt excuſe me."

Edward roſe, and advanced towards the door; Clariſſa attended him.—Then, turning round and taking hold of her hand with an affection and tender ſolicitude in his countenance that covered her with bluſhes, he exclaimed, "What nothing, Clariſſa—not one word?"

After a pauſe—"Go, my generous protector," cried ſhe, "and reſt aſſured if I could reconcile ſuch a ſtep with prudence,

dence, what you wiſh, I fear, would not be wanting."

Edward thanked her in rapture; preſſed her hand to his lips, and haſtily departed.

As ſoon as Clariſſa could recover from the perturbation of her ſpirits which this laſt effort had occaſioned, ſhe advanced towards the door and releaſed her captive.

"My dear Miſs Leſley," cried Auguſta, "I ſincerely congratulate you on the conqueſt you have made.—Such men as my couſin are not frequently to be met with;—how happy will you ſpend your life, allied to ſuch a character!"

"That happineſs will never be mine," rejoined Clariſſa; "and I hope you will have the goodneſs to believe me, when I declare, that whatever my ſentiments

may

be respecting him, or however I might wish it possible, I have never, by word or look, encouraged him to make this declaration."

"Of that I am convinced," rejoined Augusta; "but perhaps you think it necessary to make this asseveration to me, in consequence of the general report.

"You may remember I yesterday informed you to the contrary, and I again assure you it is the furthest from my thoughts; we esteem each other as relations, but shall never be nearer allied than we are."

"I made use of the remark," resumed Clarissa, "lest you should suppose I had endeavoured to ensnare his affections.—I scorn all mercenary motives;—but I will confess to you, I have never so much regretted the want of fortune as since

I have

I have been introduced to his knowledge.

" Had our ſituations in life been more upon an equality, Heaven can witneſs with what real pleaſure I ſhould have liſtened to his propoſal.—But as it is, it will be to me a ſource of ſorrow."

" Can it be poſſible," rejoined Auguſta, " that any perſon ſhould obſtinately refuſe happineſs when it courts their acceptance, through a falſe pride and miſtaken notion!—But I ſhall truſt to events; you will think differently hereafter.—Edward will be encouraged by the confeſſion you partly made, and will return to plead his cauſe—I hope with more ſucceſs."

" There I was wrong," ſaid Clariſſa; " I know not how the words eſcaped me, but his look penetrated to my feelings, which,

which, together with the gratitude I owe, threw me off my guard;—and this muſt plead my excuſe, for I can make no other."

"There needs none," reſumed Auguſta; "take my word for it he will eſteem you the more for your candour.—I know him well."

Here Auguſta launched out in encomiums on Edward, and powerfully pleaded his cauſe.

In which attempt I ſhall leave her, while I return to Sir Charles.

CHAP. II.

SOMERS and Theodore (who had been invited by Sir Charles, for the purpofe of atteſting the execution of the deed of conveyance between Sir Thomas and him), repaired to his houſe at an early hour. And as Sir Thomas had not then arrived, Somers took the opportunity of explaining to him the motives he had for adviſing him to inſiſt on the arrears of rent being conveyed with the eſtate; but did not fully ſtate the particulars, contenting himſelf by ſaying, that Bridport was unfortunately indebted to Sir Thomas, who took a delight in perſecuting him.

This partial explanation on the part of Somers was given leſt Sir Charles (if made acquainted with the whole particulars)

culars) ſhould by his warmth lead Sir Thomas to ſuſpect his motive before he had ſigned the deed.

"Aye, aye," rejoined Sir Charles, "I ſee how it is—this is ſome of your ill-timed benevolence.—

"Sir Thomas (whatever may be his private follies) is by far too generous a character to perſecute a man for his miſfortunes.

"I have no doubt but this fellow has been extravagant.—He has been gambling away his property—rioting in drunkenneſs—attending horſe races—or keeping women; ſome traits of this nature I ſhall find in him."

"I ſhall refer you to Sir Thomas," replied Somers, "after the execution of the deed, and if he then adviſes you to

diſcharge

difcharge him, I hope you will agree to it."

"Whether he does or not,' refumed Sir Charles, "I fhall certainly do it, as it is your requeft."

Somers thanked him for the promifed favour, and having obferved a diffatisfaction on the countenance of Theodore, he gave a turn to the converfation by enquiring for Augufta.

At this juncture Freeman made his appearance.

"I guefs where fhe is," cried Freeman, who not finding her at home fhrewdly fufpected fhe was concealed at Clariffa's during the time he was making his propofal to her; "fhe has gone out to vifit the young lady who was here yefterday."

"Your

"Your wiſdom may be miſtaken for once," replied Sir Charles.

"Where can ſhe be?" reſumed Freeman; "the carriage is not with her, as it ſtands in the yard, therefore ſhe cannot be far off; but perhaps ſhe is at home, and abſents herſelf leſt ſhe ſhould prove an interruption to the buſineſs you are upon."

"You are mighty inquiſitive," reſumed Sir Charles; "what, it makes you uneaſy I ſee; well, well, I am glad you are ſo much concerned for her:—ſhe will return before it is dark, I have no doubt; but I cannot tell you where ſhe is gone, as I promiſed not to inform any one, as ſhe did not wiſh to be interrupted."

"I have it," ſaid Freeman;—"ſhe is viſiting ſome of her penſioners."

The arrival of Sir Thomas with his attorney put an end to the enquiry.

The deeds were read over—the money paid down—and the ſignatures affixed; but upon the ſuggeſtion of Somers that Theodore would be an improper witneſs on account of his aſſuming a fictitious name, Freeman ſupplied his place.

"And now," ſaid Somers, addreſſing himſelf to Sir Thomas, "as your attorney is preſent it would be the beſt time to ſettle the buſineſs we were ſpeaking of yeſterday."

"I do not comprehend you," replied Sir Thomas, "and will thank you to remind me."

"You may recollect," reſumed Somers, "we were converſing on the affair of Mr. Bridport:—I will thank you therefore

fore to write his difcharge, and Sir Charles will indorfe it.—But, I believe, I ought to apply to him in the firft inftance, as he has purchafed the arrears of rent;—the right now lays with him."

Sir Thomas bit his lips in an agony of fpite.

"What is this bufinefs?" cried Sir Charles.

"Nothing of any import," replied Somers:—"only a poor fellow not worth a groat, whom Sir Thomas, at my requeft, has promifed to difcharge.—I hope you will agree to it."

Sir Thomas dreading an explanation, and finding no remedy, determined to make a virtue of neceffity.

"I never am worfe than my word," faid he: "and as Sir Charles has no objection, I will write it immediately."

 This

This he did; and Sir Charles having endorfed it, delivered it to the attorney.

Somers at the fame time wrote an invitation, and requefted the attorney would do him the favour to inclofe it with the difcharge.

This bufinefs being adjufted, although greatly to the diffatisfaction of Sir Thomas, the party adjourned to dinner.

Theodore could fcarcely be prevailed upon to tafte a morfel: he was too much chagrined at the difappointment he had met with in not feeing Augufta; who he concluded had abfented herfelf on purpofe to avoid him.

He ruminated on the expreffion of Sir Charles, wherein he confeffed fhe had made him promife not to inform any one where fhe was gone, as fhe did not wifh to be interrupted.

He

He conceived the company of Freeman could be no interruption to her, as they were generally together; and if ſhe feared any interruption from Somers, or himſelf, it followed, of courſe, that ſhe muſt be gone to viſit ſome perſon with whom they were acquainted: after comparing theſe circumſtances, he conceived ſhe was ſpending the day with Clariſſa.

Thither he determined to bend his courſe in ſearch of her, and make his viſit wear the appearance of accident: having ſettled this point, he excuſed himſelf from drinking any wine after dinner; alleging, that he wanted a little air, and ſhould walk.

With eager ſteps he purſued his way towards the ferry; and having croſſed it, he wound round the hill for the pur-

pofe of arriving at the back of the cottage, left Augufta might, on feeing him, think proper to abfent herfelf.

Having come within fight of the garden, he beheld Augufta and Clariffa walking.

He fprang over the rails, and accofted them.

"Good Heavens!" exclaimed Augufta, as fhe turned round and beheld him; "I imagined you were fpending the day at my father's."

"I fhould have been there till this time," replied Theodore, "but I take no pleafure in wine: and your being abfent, fufficiently accounts for my leaving them."

Theodore had been the fubject of their converfation for a confiderable part of the

the day; from which Clariſſa was able to learn that he was far from being diſagreeable to Auguſta.

"Why," ſaid Clariſſa, "ſhould Miſs Freeman's abſence plead an excuſe for your rudeneſs in leaving your company?"

"I have been guilty of none to them," replied he, "as I had their permiſſion. I can receive no pleaſure at Sir Charles's during Auguſta's abſence, except it is when I reflect it was the ſpot in which I firſt had the happineſs of beholding her."

"And is this really true?" ſaid Clariſſa; "did the ſight of Miſs Freeman afford you ſo much happineſs?"

"Fye, Clariſſa!" exclaimed Auguſta; "you will force him into ſuch a complication of falſehoods, that he will be neceſſitated to bluſh at repeating them."

 "When

"When I am guilty of that vice," rejoined Theodore, "I ſhall no doubt have occaſion to bluſh.——Yes, Miſs Leſley, I poſitively aver I never before felt a real pleaſure in the company of any one till I met Miſs Freeman."

"Why do you addreſs yourſelf to me?" ſaid Clariſſa; "I am not the perſon you wiſh to convince."

"He is aſhamed to ſay as much to me," rejoined Auguſta.—"It was but yeſterday he was declaring he had ſeen a perſon in whom all the accompliſhments of our ſex were united; and that he ſhould conſider himſelf unfit to live, if he did not feel the force of them."

"It is very true," reſumed Theodore, "and you was the perſon I alluded to; which I ſhould at the requeſt of your father have explained, had it not been

for

for the prudent caution I received from Mr. Somers.—For, oh! Miſs Freeman, to ſay I love you, is trifling to what I feel. —By Heavens! I adore you."

Now was a crimſon bluſh diffuſed over the lovely features of Auguſta. Yet could ſhe not perſuade herſelf that Freeman had impoſed on her.

"This is ſtrange," whiſpered Clariſſa, alluding to the prior engagement Auguſta had informed her of.

"Theodore," ſaid Auguſta, "you are the laſt perſon whom I expected to hear ſuch a declaration from.—My conduct has been the reſult of friendſhip; I felt for you when I conſidered your ſituation; nor did I imagine I had given you encouragement thus to treat me.—I am confident you forget yourſelf.

" It appears to me, that you ſuſpected I was here, and came this way on purpoſe to inſult me."

" Pardon me," replied Theodore, " I did ſuſpect you were here ; and came this way for the purpoſe of relieving my mind from the burthen that overpowers it ; but did not expect you would have taken it as an inſult.—Neither have I forgot myſelf.—It is the knowledge of what I am, that emboldens me to enter on this explanation.

" I confeſs myſelf in an error in one particular ;—I ſhould firſt have found an opportunity of acquainting you with who I am ; then this apparent outrage would not have appeared ſo glaring : but, I know not from what cauſe it has originated, yet you have prevented me by a ſingular coolneſs :

nefs: and when I obferved an alteration in you, I was interrupted from fo doing by the company prefent.

"This afternoon, I meant (prior to my entering upon any other fubject) to have revealed myfelf to you in confidence; but my affection maftered my reafon, and I hope it will plead in extenuation of my offence."

"You wound me," replied Augufta, "by fuppofing I alluded to your prefent fituation.

"No explanation can do away the lafting objection I have to hearing fuch a declaration from you; and nothing can offend me more than by perfifting in a repetition of it.—You will therefore oblige me by dropping a fubject fo difagreeable to me.

"I fhall be happy to confider you as

 a friend

a friend, during the time you remain in the country, but nothing further."

This poſitive denial of Auguſta's, which was forced from her lips in conſequence of a firm belief that Edward had not impoſed on her, had a powerful effect on the feelings of Theodore. He turned pale, while his heart ſunk within him. He had ſcarcely taſted food ſince the preceding day; ſince which period, his mind had been in a continual ſtate of agitation: nor had he cloſed his eyes during the night.

Theſe circumſtances, combined, rendered him unable to ſupport himſelf with fortitude.

Clariſſa obſerved him to lay hold of the branches that compoſed the arbour for ſupport, at the ſame time viewing his

countenance;

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then muſt be his feelings when he looks back on the object he has deceived into affection, and afterwards cruelly abandoned?

"Believe me, no ſuch character could endure the painful recollection; he is, therefore, in compliment to his own feelings, neceſſitated to act with truth and conſtancy.

"Such is my opinion, and I truſt will always be my practice.

"As yet I have not been put to the trial, having never known what it was to feel a ſentiment of love till I was introduced to you at your father's; nor did I ever profeſs, either through compliment or gallantry, to feel what I did not poſſeſs."

There is a certain energy and force in the delivery of truth, that ſeldom

fails

fails to carry conviction to the hearts of the auditors.

Augusta had listened with attention to the close argument of Theodore, and beheld the manly dignity which accompanied his last expression, and which incautiously forced from her lips the ejaculation of, "You surprise me!"

"Why should it create surprise?" rejoined Theodore; "is it a matter so extraordinary? and yet your countenance betokens the surprise you mention.—Oblige me by assigning the cause from whence this has its origin."

"I had been otherwise informed," replied Augusta.

"What officious meddling fool has been surmising?" cried he; "or what artful villain has been undermining my peace by thus wantonly stabbing my

character,

character, and converting ill-placed conjecture into fact?

"Oblige me still farther," contined he, "by giving me the author."

Augusta beheld the fire that beamed in the eye of Theodore, and trembled for the consequences.

She saw that she had gone too far, and therefore endeavoured to recede.

"It was a trifling, but *confidential* conversation," resumed she; "perhaps I may have erred; and, although it can be of no material consequence to me, I will investigate it farther."

"Dastardly cowards," exclaimed Theodore, "who can stab the character of an individual behind his back, and then shield themselves from correction by requiring the confidence of the hearer!"

"Perhaps I was wrong," resumed Augusta;

Augusta; "let me intreat you to drop the subject, and devote the residue of the afternoon to tranquillity; after which, as you have strolled this way, I shall request you to conduct me home."

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

THEODORE expreſſed the pleaſure he ſhould receive in attending her;—and then turning to Clariſſa, "Thoſe miniatures," ſaid he, "ſeem to engage your particular attention; I am confident you can have no knowledge of the originals."

"I beg your pardon," returned Clariſſa, "I am confident of having ſomewhere ſeen this gentleman, and in the ſame dreſs in which he is painted."

Theodore ſmiled. "That is impoſſible," ſaid he, "unleſs you had been to the Weſt Indies, as he has reſided there for many years."

"I beg your pardon," rejoined Clariſſa, "you are right.—It is not the gentleman

tleman I have feen, but the portrait of him.

"Mrs. Bentley," continued fhe, "whofe hufband was an officer in the army, frequently vifited a colonel at whofe houfe I have feen the refemblance of this, but as large as life;—it is Lord—Lord—Lord blefs me, what is his title?—I cannot now recollect:—however he was the colonel's patron; for which, in token of gratitude, he has placed his lordfhip's portrait in his drawing-room."

"Your creative imagination then, it feems," faid Theodore, "has converted my father into a lord.—I feel greatly obliged to you for the honour you have conferred upon my family."

"I could have fworn," faid Clariffa, "that the portrait I mention was the original of this—or this the original of the

the portrait—or that your father was the original of both; but you ought to be the beſt judge.

"The party I allude to was certainly a nobleman, who left England to take poſſeſſion of a large eſtate in the Weſt Indies; and perhaps I may be ſtill in the right, as you have not contradicted it."

"I have not heard," replied Theodore, "of any ſuch honour having been conferred upon my father *ſince* he left England; and if there had, I muſt of courſe have been made acquainted with it."

"You ſee, Clariſſa," rejoined Auguſta, "we never ſhould be too poſitive to any thing."

"Well, ſir," reſumed Clariſſa, "your father then has the honour of being very like my Lord—dear me, what is his name?—how

how ſtrange that I cannot think of his title!—but I will ſhew it Mrs. Bentley; ſhe will aſſiſt my recollection."

"No, no," cried Theodore in haſte, "give me the miniatures, or Mrs. Bentley will be converting my poor father into an Emperor of Morocco."

As Theodore appeared earneſt in his requeſt, Clariſſa returned them.

The reſidue of the day, till the ſun was ſetting, was ſpent in general converſation. Auguſta then profeſſed an anxiety to return, and Theodore accompanied her.

Having arrived at Sir Charles's, they found the party ſtill over their bottle.

Sir Charles ſtarted up: "Now faith, Mr. Theodore," cried he, "you ſhall not eſcape us:—there ſtands your bottle of Burgundy—I inſiſt on your drinking it: what

what you ſtole a march, did you, on purpoſe to avoid it ?"

Theodore pleaded indiſpoſition; and the company interpoſing, he was content in leſſening his demand to a bumper.

"Come," cried Sir Charles, "give us for a toaſt your favourite girl;—I gueſs who it is; you appeared to have no great diſinclination to a viſit there the other morning, and it is my opinion you ſtrolled there this afternoon."

"If I have no particular favourite," replied Theodore, "I ſhall find it difficult to obey you; but I will give you the lady I viſited—Miſs Leſley."

"A charming girl!" cried Sir Thomas; "but if you were confined to the propoſed toaſt, you would, in my opinion, have given the lady you went to attend home."

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL

Sir Charles laughed heartily. " What my Augusta?" said he. " Ah, Sir Thomas, your head will never be overburthened with too much penetration; why, man, he knows she is disposed of already."

" I shall not dispute with you," returned Sir Thomas, " who are so famed for it; I merely delivered my opinion."

" Unasked," said Theodore, with warmth.

" Yes, sir, unasked," rejoined Sir Thomas, with equal warmth; " I hope I may have the liberty of so doing without asking your consent."

" Certainly," replied Theodore; " and as you have endeavoured to confer a favour on me, I will return it by proposing a toast to be drank by you."

" That is right," " exclaimed Sir Charles, " let us have her:—fill your Glasses."

" Come,

"Come, Sir Thomas," reſumed Theodore, "give us the poor, ruined, and undone Miſs Bridport."

Sir Thomas ſeized a bottle that ſtood near, and roſe for the purpoſe of bringing it in contact with Theodore's head, but was prevented by Sir Charles who ſeized his arm.

In the mean time, as he held the neck of the bottle in his hand and the bottom part upwards, his courage was cooled by the contents emptying itſelf up his ſleeve.

Auguſta, not knowing the gentlemen were in their cups when ſhe entered the room, had remained a ſilent ſpectator, till obſerving Sir Thomas aiming the bottle at Theodore, ſhe then gave a loud ſcream and ſunk down through terror.

All was now a ſcene of confuſion.

Freeman, in the act of ſtarting up to aſſiſt Auguſta, overthrew the table;—the ſervants came from all parts of the houſe to her aſſiſtance.

In a ſhort time Auguſta was recovered, but nothing could reſtore the conviviality of the party.

Somers and Theodore took leave of Sir Charles; the former giving the latter a preſſing invitation to his houſe.

Sir Thomas was now left to vent his malice on the abſent party, which he did by aſſerting that Theodore was a pert boy whom Somers encouraged in his inſolence: that he was introduced in that country under very ſuſpicious circumſtances: that it was the duty of Sir Charles to have inveſtigated the cauſe for his quitting his friends—if he had any;

—but

—but for his part, he declared himſelf of opinion that he had done ſome act to forfeit all his ties of friendſhip, or otherwiſe he would not be ſo careful in concealing the knowledge of it from every individual.

Freeman defended the character of Theodore as far as his ſmall acquaintance with him would permit; declared he conſidered his opinions ill founded, and that he ought at all events to be conſidered innocent till ſome ſpecies of guilt could be proved.

"That I admit," rejoined Sir Thomas; "but in the mean time you may be courting the acquaintance of a pickpocket or a common ſwindler."

"You are too hard upon Theodore," ſaid Sir Charles, "he has not the appear-

ance of ſuch a character; any perſon may ſee he is a gentleman by his manners, and I am confident he has received a liberal education."

"As to his appearance denoting him a gentleman," replied Sir Thomas, "ſo did the famous Barrington's. You ſay he has received a liberal education; if he has (and I am much inclined to doubt it), it is then a certain proof his friends have done their duty by him, and affords a ſtrong argument againſt him; for is it to be ſuppoſed, that thoſe friends who have been ſo mindful of his future happineſs, ſhould now be endeavouring to plot his deſtruction, as he would inſinuate?—He calls upon you to admit him to your acquaintance—your houſe—and your family.

"He is little more than a boy, yet expects that you are to have a full confidence in him.

"What confidence will he repoſe in you?—None.—Guilt is ever aſhamed to ſhew its face;—and this accounts for his ſilence: but he can be bold enough where he has no occaſion.

"Did it follow, becauſe I propoſed your daughter to him for a toaſt, that he ſhould in return propoſe to me a common woman?

"This, ſir, was what enraged me; I could not bear to hear her put in compariſon with the dregs of ſociety."

"Sir Thomas," cried Freeman, "if you perſiſt in thus calumniating Theodore, I ſhall be driven to the neceſſity of explaining who the perſon is that he propoſed to you.

 "As

" As to his having the ſmalleſt idea of conveying an offence to my couſin, I am confident he had not, as no perſon can ſtand higher in his eſtimation than Auguſta."

" There you are right," cried Sir Thomas, " at leaſt; having her father's fortune in his eye, he endeavours to worm himſelf into her favour, while his hours of ſoft dalliance are ſpent with the agreeable cottager on the hill; and thus, like a truly faſhionable young man, he is catering for a wife and a faſcinating convenient object at the ſame time."

Freeman darted a look of contempt on him for this laſt remark concerning Clariſſa, and replied, " That as ſhe was an acquaintance of Auguſta's, and had no one to defend her, he would do it with his life againſt any one who dared

dared to breathe an insinuation against her."

"You surprise me!" cried Sir Charles:" "What is the meaning of this?—Sir Thomas, I must needs say, carries his inveteracy against Theodore too far, and his suspicions respecting others are certainly ill-founded.—But there is no occasion for tilting swords, I hope, or exchanging shot.—Come, we will have another bottle, and drink oblivion to all this nonsence and rancour" (at the same time ringing the bell, and ordering a servant to produce it).

Sir Thomas was not aware that Freeman would have been so ready to stand up in defence of Clarissa; or probably he never would have thrown out an allusion against her. He therefore thought it necessary to lessen the force of his expression,

preſſion, by explaining.—"You wrong me," reſumed he, "if you ſuppoſe I meant to inſinuate any thing to the diſadvantage of the young lady in queſtion; I believe her to be an amiable character; yet it does not follow but that Theodore, prompted by her beauty and her poverty, may have an inclination to make her otherwiſe."

Freeman, after declaring he did not believe Theodore had any ſuch an idea, thought proper to accept this explanation as an apology.

The converſation was here put an end to at the requeſt of Sir Charles.

Sir Thomas, after taking a glaſs of wine, and promiſing to attend him on the enſuing day to ſome of the principal tenants on the eſtate he had purchaſed, took his leave.

When

When Sir Thomas was gone, Augusta entered the room, and Sir Charles began by observing to Freeman that what had fell from Sir Thomas concerning Theodore had left a strong impression on his mind; "I wish," continued he, "I had not given him a general invitation to my house, till I had received some satisfactory account concerning him."

Augusta defended him with all the rhetoric she was mistress of; but Sir Charles's penetration had been set to work, and it was not all that she or Freeman could advance, that would make the least difference in him. "He had," he said, "come to a determination not to repeat his invitation, till he should be satisfied concerning some doubts that had arisen in his mind."

"Let your conduct be what it may," rejoined

rejoined Freeman, "I ſhall certainly cultivate his acquaintance.—He is a valuable young man, and I am not the leaſt fearful of having my morals corrupted by his ſociety."

"Do as you pleaſe," reſumed Sir Charles, "but do not introduce him here, unleſs you find him inclined to truſt me with ſome further particulars reſpecting himſelf."

Auguſta ſuggeſted to her father the impropriety of forbidding him the houſe, after he had ſo preſſingly entreated his company; and likewiſe hinted at the offence it would in all probability convey to Mr. Somers, at whoſe houſe he was, and who thought him deſerving of his protection.

Sir Charles replied, that he ſhould ſtate to Mr. Somers the motives for his conduct,

which

which he was determined not to alter, as he had made up his mind.

Thus was Theodore, through the machinations of Sir Thomas, ſhut out from the houſe; and of courſe deprived of an opportunity of ſeeing Auguſta, unleſs by accident.

CHAP. IV.

ON the enfuing morning, Freeman and Augufta being together without the company of a third perfon, fhe thought it a favourable opportunity to afk him farther refpecting the lady he had informed her of, that occafioned Theodore to leave his uncle's protection. "I am rather inclined to doubt your affertion," faid fhe, "concerning the lady you mentioned that Theodore was engaged to, or otherwife you would have explained as much to my father, as it fully accounts for his quitting his home."

"Theodore would not have thanked me," replied Freeman, "for conveying the intelligence.—You may remember he denied

denied it to Sir Charles when he charged him with it."

"Do you then mean to infift," refumed Augufta, "that he is really engaged?"

"I fee plainly," returned Freeman, "you have a ftrong defire to know; and if you will ingenuoufly tell me from whence this defire originates, I will deal as ingenuoufly by you in return, and ftate who the lady is that holds him in her chains."

"Then there really is a lady?" refumed fhe.

"As certain," replied Freeman, "as you fit there: I had it from his own lips."

"This world is full of deception," faid Augufta, "and Theodore is a mafter-piece of it."

"You would make an excellent couple," rejoined he: "if I do not miftake, you

you are another.—You are endeavouring to deceive me, but cannot, as I clearly ſee you have formed an attachment for him."

"I ſhould indeed have reaſon to regret," reſumed ſhe, "if that were the caſe: your wiſdom is miſtaken for once."

"Then," replied Freeman, "you may depend that all I told you of Theodore is true."

"I make not the leaſt doubt of it," rejoined Auguſta, "as I believe you would on no account perſevere in a falſhood."

"No more than you would," rejoined Freeman.—"But I muſt be gone to Somers'; I mean to breakfaſt with him this morning.

"Have you any tender enquiries to make concerning Theodore's health? or is there any thing you wiſh me to ſay in

your behalf?—Believe me, I will plead your caufe with him, as I guefs how it is with you."

"Edward," faid Augufta, "do not tantalize me, but treat me as a friend."

"My conduct," replied he, "fhall be the exact copy of yours.

"You have forgotten to treat me as your friend, by not acting ingenuoufly with me, and have endeavoured to impofe upon my underftanding by perfifting in an untruth.—Let me experience from you the fame candour, the fame open freedom of fpeech I ufed to meet with, and you will find it as amply returned by me;—till which time you muft excufe me.

"Not that I mean to infinuate that what I told you concerning Theodore is untrue;

untrue;—you know I ſcorn an untruth as much as you do."

Freeman now left her for the purpoſe of purſuing his walk, while Auguſta ſtood confounded at the deception of mankind.

Theodore had appeared to her to poſſeſs a ſoul fraught with many valuable ſentiments.

If, therefore, ſuch a character could deceive her, and even work up his feelings to the higheſt pitch—even to fainting, in order to add to his deception—where muſt ſhe then look for the truth? She reviewed the conduct of Freeman; he was her relation; had always been her friend, and ever dealt by her with the utmoſt candour.

Thus did ſhe ruminate, without conſi-

dering

dering ſeriouſly what Edward had advanced, or that his conduct in this inſtance was the reſult of her own. As to want of candour on her part, ſhe perfectly excuſed herſelf from it, in conſequence of the difference of ſex.

It would, ſhe thought, be improper to relate her ſentiments on ſo delicate a ſubject to Edward. And if ſhe had been inclined, her diffidence would have prevented her.

This idea never entered into his mind; he recollected that his couſin had been in the habit of entruſting him with her ſentiments on the moſt trivial ſubjects that hitherto had occupied her thoughts, and therefore could plead no excuſe for her in this particular. He did not take into conſideration that this was an affair totally new to her, or that her diffidence or

delicacy would prevent an explanation.

This it was that made him perfevere in the fable, by way of punifhing her, for witholding that confidence which he confidered himfelf entitled to.

Augufta having wrought up her mind to a firm belief that Theodore had impofed on her, now looked on his conduct as an infult; and having called in a fpark of pride to her aid, fhe determined never again to truft herfelf in his company.

Sir Thomas made his appearance for the purpofe of taking an early ride with Sir Charles, and having breakfafted, Augufta was left alone to confirm herfelf in the unfavourable impreffion fhe had received.

In the mean time Freeman vifited Somers, and

and imparted to him a portion of the converſation that paſſed the preceding evening relative to Theodore, requeſting he would endeavour to prevent his viſits till Sir Charles ſhould alter his opinion. After which he haſtened to Mrs. Bentley's cottage, and finding Clariſſa alone, he laboured to remove thoſe objections ſhe had raiſed againſt his propoſals, but was equally unſucceſsful as on his former viſit, except that he thought he could diſcern a ſpark of affection in her eye; and concluded from ſome words which had fallen, that if his father could be brought to approve of their union, the grand obſtacle would be removed.

Clariſſa during his viſit treated him with every mark of friendſhip and eſteem; and Edward having made his ſtay as long as he could with propriety, returned to Sir Charles,

Charles, where he found Augufta and her father in converfation, which from the appearance of both parties he judged to be of an unpleafant nature, but it was dropt on his entrance.

Sir Thomas had, during his ride, endeavoured to excite all the hatred and contempt he could in the breaft of Sir Charles againft Theodore.

He afferted, that from his obfervation, he was pofitive there was no attachment exifting between Augufta and Freeman; but that, on the contrary, fhe harboured an affection for Theodore. To prove this, he reminded him of a variety of circumftances which, although trifling of themfelves, yet when added together left an unfavourable impreffion.

"If," continued he, "Theodore could prove himfelf to be upon an equality

with

with your daughter, and were a character deferving of her, I fhould not, whatever may be my fentiments refpecting her, advance one word againft him, but I am pofitive to the contrary. You may depend he has fomewhere feen the cottager, Mifs Lefley. And having heard of the ridiculous character of Somers, and his ill-timed benevolence, he thought, by practifing on his credulity, to obtain a footing in his houfe, which could not fail of introducing him to her acquaintance, and afford him an opportunity of carrying fome infamous plan into execution.

"This introduction to Somers, together with his apprehenfion which occafioned his being brought before you, has been the means likewife of introducing him to the acquaintance of your daughter; and

and being a keen ſportſman, and perhaps a needy fortune hunter, he could not ſuffer ſo rich a prize to eſcape him, but has laid plans to enſnare her affection; and I would anſwer with my life, if ſhe could be prevailed upon to confeſs the truth, ſhe would acknowledge it."

"If one half of what you have aſſerted be true," exclaimed Sir Charles, "he is the greateſt villain in exiſtance."

"I have no doubt," reſumed Sir Thomas, "but you will find it to be the caſe; and ſhould it prove as I have ſuggeſted, as likewiſe that all proſpect of an union between Auguſta and your nephew ſhould fail, I hope I ſhall then be able to prevail on you to liſten to a propoſal from me."

"Name it," ſaid Sir Charles.

"That I may," reſumed he, "have your permiſſion

permiſſion to pay my addreſſes to Auguſta."

"I am not prepared," replied Sir Charles, "to receive a propoſal from you of this nature, as I have not inveſtigated this buſineſs fully.

"Whatever may be the villany of Theodore, I think he never has been able to impoſe upon my daughter. On the contrary, I have every reaſon to believe ſhe has a laſting attachment for Edward, and that their attachment is mutual; but ſhould I have been deceived, I will then conſider ſeriouſly of your propoſal, and give you my anſwer upon it."

Sir Charles's mind having been effectually poiſoned by theſe inſinuations, he took the earlieſt opportunity of leaving him for the purpoſe of conſulting with Auguſta; and on his return, finding her

alone, he without any preface defired fhe would anfwer one queftion with candour.

"Has Theodore Somers," faid he, "profeffed an attachment for you, or made you any propofal?"

Augufta was not prepared for this queftion. She blufhed and hefitated, but could not articulate a reply. This conduct in her led Sir Charles to fufpect the fact; which fo far enraged him, that he vociferated, "Anfwer me this inftant, for, by Heaven, I will know the truth!"

Terrified, and not knowing how to find a fubterfuge, fhe replied in a low tone, "Yes."

"I knew it!" cried Sir Charles; "and you tamely fubmitted to be infulted by the addreffes of an infamous fcoundrel, and one who turns out to be a bafe impoftor?"

"Good

"Good Heaven!" exclaimed Auguſta, "an impoſter?"

"Yes, yes," reſumed Sir Charles, "I have every reaſon to believe as much; and before long, depend on it, you will find my aſſertions true."

The entrance of Edward put an end to this converſation, as Sir Charles did not think proper to purſue it before him, leſt it ſhould leſſen Auguſta in his eſtimation; nor had he an opportunity of renewing it, as Freeman remained with Auguſta till ſhe retired in the evening.

CHAP. V.

ON the enfuing day, Augufta, who wifhed to relate to Clariffa what had efcaped the lips of her father, took the earlieft opportunity of vifiting her.

Theodore, in the mean time, had been informed by Somers of the alteration wrought in Sir Charles, through the interference of Sir Thomas, and had fpent a folitary day.

Hitherto he had not been debarred from feeing Augufta, unlefs it was through a penance he impofed on himfelf; but, on the contrary, had received a general invitation to the houfe; he was, therefore, not prepared to fuftain the fhock occafioned by a denial.

To fee her he was refolved on; but how to accomplifh this he could not tell.

To be feen walking near the houfe was degrading to his pride; and from the fhort acquaintance he had with her he knew of no place where fhe vifited, except at the cottage.

Thither he determined to bend his courfe on the enfuing morning.

Clariffa was alone, and complained of an unufual depreffion on her fpirits; nor was Theodore in a ftate of mind capable of chafing away her melancholy.

He informed her of the unfortunate mifconception of Sir Charles, and the confequences attendant on it.

Clariffa, on her part, promifed to fee Augufta, and remove any unfavourable impreffion from her mind which the fug-

geſtions of her father or Sir Thomas might have occaſioned; and Theodore in return authoriſed her to inform Auguſta, that he would in confidence, whenever ſhe would honour him with a hearing, ſtate to her his family and connections.

During this converſation Auguſta made her appearance; ſhe ſtarted on ſeeing Theodore, and would have retreated, but he ran towards her, and requeſted ſhe would indulge him with her company for a few minutes.

"My father," replied Auguſta, "has been made acquainted with your ſentiments, and has deſired me never to enter into a place where you are; and having no wiſh on my part, I can the more readily oblige him. I muſt therefore requeſt you will withdraw, or permit me ſo to do."

"My

"My dear Miſs Freeman," ſaid Clariſſa, "Theodore has certainly been miſrepreſented to you or to your father by Sir Thomas, and he is anxious for an opportunity of clearing himſelf."

"If my father," reſumed Auguſta, "had not forbid me on pain of his diſpleaſure ever to ſee this gentleman again, I ſhould even then, on my own part, feel ſtrongly inclined to ſhun his ſociety; he muſt therefore excuſe me from liſtening to any converſation from him."

Theodore, on hearing this reply, threw himſelf on a chair in the corner of the room, and drew out his handkerchief to wipe a tear from his eye, that otherwiſe would have expoſed itſelf by trickling down his cheek.

This action did not eſcape the notice of Auguſta, and forced a ſigh from her

 heart

heart, notwithſtanding all her efforts to the contrary.

To prevent another accident of a ſimilar nature, ſhe requeſted the company of Clariſſa in the garden for a few minutes.

Theodore, during her abſence, employed himſelf in writing a ſong, deſcriptive of his feelings and what he thought would affect the benevolent heart of Auguſta.

Clariſſa in the mean time endeavoured to defend Theodore from the aſperſions that had been thrown out againſt him; and ſo far ſoftened her reſentment, that ſhe prevailed on her to return to the houſe.

Auguſta having ſeated herſelf, Clariſſa, to afford Theodore an opportunity of pleading in his own behalf, excuſed herſelf from remaining with them while ſhe

went

went to Mrs. Bentley, alleging that ſhe ſhould be abſent but for a few minutes.

Auguſta, not thinking it prudent to remain with him during her abſence, replied that ſhe would walk in the garden till ſhe returned.

Theodore followed her, and requeſted ſhe would do him the favour to ſtate the charges that had been alleged againſt him, that he might have an opportunity of doing himſelf juſtice.

"It can be of no importance," replied Auguſta, "as from this day I never will ſee or converſe with you more; nor would I on any account have my father made acquainted with my ſeeing you here to-day."

"Then," replied Theodore, "muſt I bid

bid a long, and, perhaps, a final farewel to happineſs.

"I had fondly hoped that you would have heard my ſtory, and that the recital would have altered your opinion concerning me.

"I have ventured to declare my attachment for you;—this you deem an inſult, and your father has forbid me his houſe.

"He ſuſpects I am by birth unworthy of you, and views me in the light of an impoſtor.

"This I could do away, but you refuſe to hear me.

"You declare I have entered into engagements with another; it is, therefore, no wonder you think my addreſſes an inſult.

"I can

" I can only aver in vindication of myſelf that it is totally without foundation.

" How I am to exiſt under your diſpleaſure, and without ſeeing you, I know not; at preſent it appears impoſſible.

" I fear my affection is too deeply rooted ever to admit of it; but time will ſhew it."

" Yes, ſir," rejoined Auguſta, " time *will* ſhew it; you will as eaſily recover from it as you have done formerly on ſimilar occaſions, therefore take no heed of the conſequences."

Clariſſa had returned from Mrs. Bentley, and obſerving the ſong Theodore had compoſed laying on the table, ſhe read it, and following him into the garden requeſted Theodore would ſing it, to which requeſt he aſſented.

Augusta seated herself by the side of Clarissa, in the arbour.

Theodore had composed the song after the manner, and to the tune, of a song in the entertainment called The Children in the Wood; the first two lines of which run thus:

"That look of tender woe,
Thy fatal tale preceding."

He addressed himself to Augusta, while he sung as follows:

By yonder mossy hill
Sad Strephon stood reclining,
And view'd the murmering rill,
His future fate divining;
Cried, Hear, oh hear my prayer;
Oh, Celia, ease my anguish;
My heart's oppress'd with care,
Ah, bid it cease to languish.
Oh, my love—my love!

But

But ftill he fighed in vain;
To love fhe feem'd a ftranger,
And heeded not his pain,
But, carelefs of his danger,
Refus'd to hear his prayer,
Or eafe his load of forrow,
Till, drove by dark defpair,
And every kind of horror,
He fought a wat'ry grave.

His fate foon fpread around,
And fwiftly Celia caught it;
What, is my Strephon drown'd?
Oh, Heav'n, who could have thought it!
Why was my cruel fate
Not deftin'd to obtain him?—
Her tears were then too late,
She never could regain him.
Ah, fad effects of love!

The harmonious voice of Theodore was infinitely fuperior to his poetry. The plaintive and tender eloquence

which accompanied his words, while a tear ftood trembling on his eye-lid, had nearly deprived Augufta of her fortitude; but, recollecting herfelf, fhe ftarted up—"Clariffa," faid fhe, "I muft be gone.—My father will be anxious."

"Mifs Freeman," rejoined Theodore, "I will not be fo rude as to drive you hence.

"You wifh my abfence."

Then, with the tears ftarting from his eye, while the fulnefs of his heart almoft choaked his utterance, he articulated, "Farewel—perhaps for ever."

Augufta kept her eyes fixed upon him till he had left the gate, and then turning to Clariffa, with a pale languor on her countenance that alarmed her, exclaimed, "'Tis paft."

"Good

"Good Heaven," ſaid Clariſſa, "you are ill; ſhall I get you any thing?"

"No," replied Auguſta; "I have had a hard ſtruggle with my feelings, and now I will give them vent."

"If after all," ſaid Clariſſa, "you ſhould have been impoſed upon?"

"No," returned Auguſta, "Edward would never impoſe on me.

"It is not for the ſufferings of Theodore I feel; he, I am aſſured from his paſt conduct, will ſoon forget it; and I have a doubt whether he feels what he ſpeaks.—It is not that: but long, very long I fear, it will be before I regain that peace of mind I enjoyed ere I beheld him. I fear the name of Theodore will live in my remembrance as long as my ſorrows will permit me to exiſt."

"I never can believe," resumed Clarissa, "that Theodore has deceived you."

"Ah, my God!" exclaimed Augusta, bursting into tears, "do not persuade me to the contrary.

"I should run distracted at the recollection of my conduct if I thought so."

"Then will I say no more upon the subject," resumed Clarissa; "for either way I am sure to make you unhappy."

"Yes," rejoined Augusta, "indulge me by speaking of him.—I can think of nothing else."

"See where he sits on yonder hill," resumed Clarissa, looking out of the door; "perhaps he will return."

"If he should," cried Augusta, "shew him in.

"I do not think I said any thing at parting,

parting.—It was impolite, and looked unfriendly ;—I ſhall not forgive myſelf unleſs I repair this error. Heaven knows, I wiſh him well."

" He will not return," ſaid Clariſſa.—" He has got up, and now he walks homewards."

Auguſta flew to the door.

" See," continued Clariſſa, " how attentively he is looking down on the river.—Obſerve him—he runs."

" Clariſſa," ſaid Auguſta, " I cannot ſtay longer :—I will go ; and if I ſhould happen to find him at the ferry, I will part more friendly with him ; do you not think I ought ?"

" Indeed I think," replied Clariſſa, " that Theodore is all truth ; I never will believe he has deceived you.—You did not notice him as he ſpoke, but I am

ſure

fure each word feemed to come from his heart."

"Well, I cannot ftay," refumed Augufta, "I will fee you again to-morrow."

"Hold," cried Clariffa, "here is the fong that Theodore compofed."

Augufta took it, and then haftened over the hill that leads to the ferry, but Theodore was not to be feen: fhe looked around her in every direction, and enquired of the ferryman if he had paffed, but was anfwered in the negative.

She walked near the place, afcended another hill, and beguiled the time away, thinking he might have walked to compofe his fpirits, and fhortly would return.

At length, having ftaid about half an hour, fhe croffed the ferry, although not without fome anxious fears for his fafety,

and

and returned to her father's, where ſhe ſhut herſelf up in her chamber to give vent to her tears, in which ſituation ſhe remained till her company was requeſted at dinner.

She obeyed the ſummons, and found Sir Thomas in company with her father and Edward.

Sir Charles obſerved the alteration in her countenance.

It was viſible to all that ſhe had been in tears.

Her eyes were red and rather ſwelled; her dreſs, through neglect, was diſordered; and her features ſtrongly pourtrayed the feelings of her mind.

Sir Charles, as Freeman and Sir Thomas were preſent, contented himſelf by ſaying ſhe did not appear well.

Augusta replied she was not. Edward helped her to the wing of a fowl, which to avoid suspicion she tasted; but recollection, like a torrent that drives every thing before it, recalled to her mind that she was never again to behold Theodore, and forcing the tears again into her eyes, she arose from the table and retired.

Edward beheld with torturing anxiety the altered appearance of Augusta. He took the earliest opportunity of following her, and found her seated in a temple in the garden.

"My dear cousin," said he, "why are you thus opprest? Speak to me, have I the power to alleviate this ....

"Edward," she replied, "I am ashamed of my weakness; but you, who know what it is to feel a strong affection, will,

I hope, excufe me ;—I can no longer withold from you the caufe—'tis Theodore."

"Ha! what of him?" cried Edward haftily—"Has he ufed you ill?—fpeak; by Heaven I will make him rue the hour he did fo."

Here Edward paufed. "But that is impoffible," faid he; "he loves you too much to ufe you ill, or to venture at infulting you. His heart is the feat of truth and virtue."

"Hold, Edward," exclaimed Augufta, "can he be this, and addrefs me while he is engaged to another?—Impoffible!"

"My life upon it," replied Edward, "he never was engaged to another, nor ever felt what it was to love till he beheld you.

"The

"The ſtory was entirely of my own fabrication.

"You may rememberyou withheld your confidence from me, I therefore ſtrove to gain the ſecret by other means; and when I thought myſelf wrong, I was aſhamed to confeſs my ſtratagem, leſt you ſhould laugh at me for my error."

Edward might as well have talked to the paſſing breeze. Auguſta was unable to hear further than that the ſtory was falſe, and had fainted.

On obſerving the effect his words had on her, he took her in his arms, and ſpeedily conveyed her to the houſe without the knowledge of her father, where, with the aſſiſtance of Ellen, ſhe was ſhortly recovered.

As ſoon as ſhe could ſpeak, ſhe cried,

"Edward, you have ufed me ill;—you fhould have confidered this was a fubject I could not intruft to you, nor fhould I now have uttered a fentence, but that we have parted—never to meet again; and my heart, unable to bear its load, fought refuge in you."

"Come, come," refumed Freeman, "be compofed, all will yet be well.—I fhall vifit Theodore in the morning, and in a jocofe manner relate the ftratagem I made ufe of.

"You may depend on it he fhall not know from me your fentiments in his favour.—I will appoint to meet him at the cottage in the afternoon, and as you are in the habit of vifiting Clariffa, it will be your own fault if you do not fee him."

"You would fain footh me into happinefs," refumed Augufta, "but that is impoffible;

poſſible; I have ſo great a dread on my ſpirits, I cannot ſurmount it."

"Why this dread?" rejoined Edward. —"What have you to fear?"

Auguſta produced the ſong which Theodore had compoſed.

Edward read it, and forcing a ſmile into his countenance, "This is nothing," ſaid he, "but the mere effuſions of fancy. —He wrote it to pourtray his feelings.

"He is too ſenſible a young man, and has too high a ſenſe of religion, to put it in practice."

"There is my hope," reſumed Auguſta; "but yet I followed him from the cottage to the ferry, and muſt have overtaken him had he not hid himſelf, or done what I dread to think of."

"Did you aſk the ferryman if he had paſſed?" ſaid Edward.

"I did," replied ſhe, "but he had not ſeen him ſince the morning."

"Compoſe yourſelf," reſumed Edward; "he had only walked perhaps over the hill to alleviate his mind before he returned."

"Thither I went likewiſe," rejoined Auguſta, "but could ſee nothing of him."

"He is ſafe enough," ſaid Freeman; "I'll anſwer for it, I find him with Somers; dry up your tears, aſſume a cheerful countenance, and return to the company.—I will attend you, and after excuſing myſelf to them, will go in ſearch of him."

Auguſta, on the receipt of this promiſe, endeavoured to obey.

She walked a few minutes in the garden, while Edward made uſe of every argument

ment to do away the unpleafant and dreadful fufpicion that had taken poffeffion of her, till at length he in a great meafure fucceeded.

Accordingly as fhe got rid of this fear, fo on the other hand did the natural pride and delicacy of her fex begin to return.

She cautioned Edward to let his vifit at Somers's wear the appearance of chance, and not to exprefs an anxiety either on his or her behalf, left it fhould create fufpicion in them; at the fame time, not to forget the anxiety he had left her in, but to take the earlieft opportunity he could, confiftent with prudence, to return.

Edward promifed to obey her commands with punctuality; and Augufta having, through the affurances of Edward, regained a confiderable portion of fortitude,

tude, and forced an eafe into her countenance fhe was far from experiencing, returned with him to her father and Sir Thomas, who congratulated her on her recovery.

Edward, after taking a glafs of wine, left them, promifing to return in half an hour.

Augufta viewed her watch, left in his abfence the time fhould feem longer than ufual.

Sir Charles, who was anxious to know the caufe of her uneafinefs, requefted fhe would inform him where fhe had been in the morning.

Augufta replied, that fhe had vifited Mifs Lefley.

"I hope fhe is perfectly well?" rejoined Sir Thomas.

"Indifferent," replied Augufta; "fhe

complains of an unuſual depreſſion on her ſpirits."

"Vapours, mere vapours," ſaid Sir Thomas; "or perhaps the lady is in love. —Do you know if the young man—Theodore I think they call him—has been there this morning?"

Auguſta bluſhed, and then turned pale through recollection.

She heſitated, fearing leſt her father ſhould be offended if he thought ſhe had met him.

At length ſhe replied, that "Miſs Leſley had informed her he had called in the morning."

"It was very conſiderate of him," whiſpered Sir Thomas to Sir Charles as he ſat next him.

"Why, yes, I think ſo," replied Sir Charles, in a low tone.

"I preſume

"I prefume then," faid Sir Thomas, addreffing himfelf to Augufta, "the lovers have had a quarrel."

Augufta looked furprifed. "I beg your pardon," faid fhe, "I do not underftand you."

"Mr. Theodore and the young woman at the cottage have had fome words together," rejoined Sir Thomas, "which I fhould fuppofe has depreffed her fpirits."

Augufta fmiled at the apparent ill-founded fufpicion of Sir Thomas; but not feeling herfelf inclined to purfue the converfation by doing it away, fhe replied, "I have heard nothing of it."

"That it is very likely," faid Sir Thomas, "and yet my fufpicion may be true; as I am of opinion, let him addrefs who he may on the fcore of fortune, fhe is the party that poffeffes his affection, or I

have

have been wrongly informed.—What think you, Sir Charles?"

"I am exactly of your opinion," replied he.

Sir Thomas now looked towards Augusta with a degree of self-satisfaction in his countenance, and assumed a vacant smile to shew his teeth, which Augusta answered by a smile of contempt; yet thinking the unjust suspicion he had thrown upon Theodore deserved a reply, she added, that she considered him incapable of informing her what passed in the heart of Theodore.

"Perhaps, Miss Freeman," rejoined Sir Thomas rather ironically, "you are the best judge; but will you do me the favour to state why you think my suspicions untrue."

Augusta saw the drift of his question, and

and witneſſed the ſarcaſtic ſmile that was diſtinguiſhable on his features, ſhe therefore replied, "Becauſe, ſir, I think it impoſſible for a vicious heart to diſtinguiſh what are the feelings of a virtuous one."

"Very good, very good," returned Sir Thomas, laughing; "I give you great credit, Miſs Freeman, for the ſmart retort. —We ſhall ſee who is right in time.— Time will ſhew it.

"Yes, ſir," rejoined Auguſta, "time will ſhew it." Then recollecting theſe laſt words were thoſe made uſe of to her in the morning by Theodore, and her ſuſpicions reviving again, ſhe heaved a ſigh, and viewed her watch: the time for Edward's return was nearly expired.

She roſe, and walked to the window.

The evening was faſt approaching. She could diſtinguiſh no diſtinct object.

The time hung heavy.—She wiſhed to avoid all farther converſation with Sir Thomas, ſince he choſe ſo unpleaſant a ſubject, therefore, taking the ſong from her boſom written by Theodore, ſhe ſat down and played the ſame tune in which he ſung it. This, together with the anxiety of her mind on account of Edward's long abſence, was almoſt too much for her ſpirits.

She returned the ſong to its former envied ſtation, and was endeavouring to fortify and recruit her ſpirits, when the name of Somers was announced.

CHAP. VI.

SOMERS entered with a countenance that beſpoke ſorrow, anxiety, and vexation.

He enquired, if any one preſent could inform him of Clariſſa or of Theodore.

At this juncture Freeman, who had been to the lodge, entered. They had not met with each other, as Somers had but then come from the cottage.

"What of Clariſſa?" ſaid Freeman.

"She is miſſing," replied Somers: "I have been with Mrs. Bentley, who is nearly diſtracted on her account, as ſhe left her home in the afternoon, ſaying ſhe was ſent for by me, and has not ſince returned."

"You

"You ſurpriſe me," cried Freeman.

"In addition to this," reſumed Somers, "Theodore, who I am confident would not have diſappointed me at dinner, unleſs ſome unforeſeen accident had happened, is likewiſe miſſing."

Auguſta imagined all her fears were realiſed.

She put no faith in what had been related by Sir Thomas, but concluded he had thrown himſelf into the river.

Unable to ſuſtain herſelf under ſo afflicting an idea, ſhe ſunk on a chair in the corner of the room, and fainted, unnoticed by any one.

"Now, Sir Charles," cried Sir Thomas, alluding to the information brought by Somers, "I hope you will believe there was ſome foundation for my ſuſpicions."

"What ſuſpicions?" cried Freeman haſtily; "where do you ſuſpect ſhe is?"

Sir Thomas replied by making uſe of the ſame arguments he had uſed to poiſon the mind of Sir Charles.

Freeman had ſcarcely patience to hear him, and rejoined with marked acrimony, "They know beſt how to ſuſpect, who have been guilty of a ſimilar conduct.

"Theodore would ſcorn ſuch an atrocious act.—But if he were baſe enough to attempt it, think you Clariſſa, who abhors vice as much you do virtue, could ever conſent to a propoſal ſo infamous?"

"Sir Thomas," ſaid Somers, "I have liſtened with ſilent horror to the abominable inſinuations made uſe of by you againſt Theodore.

"I have ever made it a remark, that the parties on whom guilt ought to attach,

are the firſt to accuſe others, and raiſe improbable ſuſpicions, that themſelves may remain undetected. I have a letter in my poſſeſſion, that has been ſent to London, and has on it the Briſtol poſt mark.

"This letter, which is anonymous, I verily believe to be your hand-writing, and was ſent to give Theodore's relations an information where to find him.

"If a poor man had done this, he would, in his letter, have claimed the reward, and pointed out a place where it could be ſent him.

"If a rich one had done it with a good intent, why did he ſcreen his name? Add to this, both the ſtyle and letters are exactly like yours.

"As to Clariſſa, perhaps you can beſt inform us what is become of her.—You

may

may remember, I found you a few days back at the cottage.

"Men of your libertine principles are not partial to the enjoyment of a walk in an unfrequented part of the country, unlefs they have fome plan in view. You have, it feems, before fuggefted, that Clariffa would elope, and had the affurance to name Theodore as the man with whom fhe would purfue a vicious courfe.

"Under his name you meant to fcreen the vice you wifh to practife."

Freeman, who was wrought up to the greateft pitch of rage againft Sir Thomas by the arguments of Somers, without ftaying till he had finifhed them, fprung over the chairs, and feizing him by his cravat, "Monfter," cried he, "tell me where fhe is, or I will fhake this gingerbread frame of yours into atoms!"

Sir Charles interpofed, and infifted on Edward leaving him, while he invefti-gated the bufinefs.

As foon as Sir Thomas could recover his breath, which was nearly gone through the grafp of Freeman, he begged to be heard.

" As to the letter," faid he, " I folemnly proteft I know nothing of it; and with refpect to my running away with the young lady, it is contrary to common fenfe. Sir Charles can teftify, that I have been here ever fince the morning; and Mifs Freeman was with her but a few hours back; therefore my innocence is as plain as is the unwarrantable infolence I have been obliged to endure."

" Sir Charles," faid Somers, " permit me to afk you one queftion.

" Did Sir Thomas come here this day by

by your invitation, or for the purpofe of fettling any bufinefs?"

"Neither that I know of," replied Sir Charles.

"Now, let me afk," refumed Somers, "is it likely, if Sir Thomas intended to force Clariffa from Mrs. Bentley's, that he would be feen in the tranfaction? or is it not more likely that he fhould employ fome wretch divefted of principle to perform it for him?—And that his character might go unimpeached by Mifs Lefley's friends, was it not neceffary he fhould fpend the day with them to avoid fufpicion?"

Freeman thought he difcovered a trait of confcious guilt in the features of Sir Thomas, and exclaimed, "By Heaven your are right!"

Then feizing Sir Thomas by his collar,

and driving him up againſt the wall, declared if he did not inſtantly reveal where ſhe was, he would knock him down.

Sir Charles, in attempting to part them, diſcovered his daughter, who he did not recollect was in the room.

Every other conſideration now gave way to the ſituation of Auguſta.

Various ſervants attended, and every means within their power was uſed for her recovery ; but this could not ſpeedily be accompliſhed ; ſhe had lain too long in her ſituation.

A phyſician was immediately ſent for.

Somers took her hand, to diſcover if there was any pulſe.

It was cold and lifeleſs, nor could he find the leſt vibration; and ſilently concluding ſhe was dead, let fall a tear in honour of humanity.

Freeman

Freeman was drowned in tears: Sir Thomas buſied himſelf in aſſiſting the ſervants: and Sir Charles was frantic; walked about the room in diſorder; ſtruck his hand on his forehead, and curſed the hour that gave him exiſtence.

Somers, whom misfortunes had humbled till fate could not awe or death diſmay, ſtood calm as a chriſtian in the craſh of worlds.

In a ſhort time the phyſician made his appearance; he ordered her inſtantly to be put in a warm bed, and having opened a vein and exhauſted every means within his power, he at length diſcovered ſigns of returning life. In about an hour Auguſta was able to articulate a few words, and requeſted that Ellen would aſſiſt her to dreſs, that ſhe might be re-

moved

moved to another apartment, as ſhe wiſhed to ſpeak with Mr. Somers.

Ellen obeyed, and as ſoon as ſhe was in readineſs delivered her meſſage, which Somers immediately attended to.

Auguſta entreated that he would ſtate the truth reſpecting Theodore, and what his real ſuſpicions were concerning him.

"I am greatly inclined to think," continued ſhe, "that he has committed ſome act of deſperation."

Somers teſtified his ſurpriſe at the laſt remark of Auguſta's, and deſired ſhe would ſtate her reaſons for drawing this concluſion.

Auguſta complied by relating to him all that had paſſed between Theodore and herſelf.

"What time," ſaid Somers, "did you

ſee him attentively ſurveying the river, and then run forwards ?"

"As near as I can remember," replied Auguſta, "it was between two and three o'clock."

"I think, I am now able," rejoined Somers," to throw ſome light on this intricate buſineſs.

"But firſt, reſpecting your ſuſpicions, reſt aſſured, they are not realiſed. Theodore is too well educated, has too high a ſenſe of the duty he owes to his God and to his parents, to be guilty of ſo raſh a tranſaction. I know that he has a ſtrong affection for you, and compoſed this ſong merely to ſhew what are ſometimes the conſequences of a denial, but without any intention of practiſing it.

"Theodore has certainly abſconded, and that for the following reaſons.—An

anonymous

anonymous letter was ſent by ſome perſon from Briſtol: the author of which I believe to be Sir Thomas. This letter was addreſſed to Mr. Quibble, the perſon mentioned in the hand-bill, informing him where the advertiſed party was to be found, and that he went by the name of Theodore Somers.

To-day, about the time you mention, a perſon, who profeſſed to be acquainted with Theodore, and declares himſelf employed by his friend, came to my houſe by water from Briſtol. When, therefore, you beheld Theodore looking attentively on the river, you may may depend he diſcovered him, and ſuſpecting his viſit was to compel him to return to his uncle's, he haſtily left the place, and ran leſt the other ſhould have ſeen him. I think," continued Somers, " when you duly

weigh

weigh thefe circumftances, you will conclude with me, that my conjectures are moft entitled to credit."

"I hope they are," returned Augufta with a figh; "but what does the man want with Theodore?"

"When firft he came," replied Somers, "I did not find him communicative.—He only anfwered to my queftions, that he wifhed to fee him, and that it was not his intention to remove him.—I then afked him how he gained the information of his refidence. 'Perhaps,' faid he, looking rather fufpicious on me, 'you are the beft judge.'

"I profeffed my furprife," continued Somers, "at his fufpicion.—He then produced the anonymous letter, which I immediately concluded was the hand-writing of Sir Thomas, and could not help uttering

ing a few invectives againſt him for his malicious interference. This conduct in me, I am of opinion, leſſened the man's ſuſpicions, as he immediately obſerved that he had concluded I took him under my protection, till I could inform his uncle, thinking I ſhould only do an act of kindneſs to all parties by ſuch a conduct, but that my ſurpriſe, which, he was pleaſed to add, appearing natural, and the explanation I had given, had made him think differently.

" He next informed me that Theodore had a friend who, for particular reaſons, adviſed his departure from his uncle's, and on hearing a letter had been ſent to Mr. Quibble, he would immediately have viſited him, but was prevented by indiſpenſable buſineſs, and therefore he had ſent him as his ſubſtitute, to warn Theodore of his

his danger, and to advife with him on what fteps were beft to be purfued, till the return of his parents, who were expected by the next fleet.

"I afked him," continued Somers, "if Theodore knew him. He replied in the affirmative, but that Theodore was not aware how much he was his friend, or that he was in the confidence of the gentleman who advifed his departure."

Augufta profeffed her furprife, and requefted of Somers to inform her who Theodore was related to.

"That," replied Somers, "I have not been able to learn, as I could gain no farther intelligence. He informs me he has particular reafons for not mentioning his family; one ofwhich is, that he was ftrictly forbid by his employer from fo doing."

"It appears ſingular," ſaid Auguſta, "that the letter ſent to Mr. Quibble ſhould fall into the hands of Theodore's friend."

"I enquired into the cauſe of this," replied Somers: "the man informs me that Mr. Quibble, who is an attorney, is out of town, and that his buſineſs is tranſacted by his clerk, whom Theodore's friend has bribed for the purpoſe of withholding the information."

Auguſta having ſatisfied herſelf as far as ſhe could reſpecting Theodore, requeſted he would inform her what it was he had ſaid concerning Clariſſa.

Somers replied, "that having waited with anxiety for the return of Theodore, who had not made his appearance at dinner, and the evening beginning to approach,

proach, he conceived that poſſibly he might be gone to the cottage with the hope that he ſhould be able to meet her with Clariſſa; that prompted by this idea, he repaired to Mrs. Bentley's, who profeſſed her ſurpriſe on ſeeing him alone, and eagerly enquired the reaſon of Clariſſa's long abſence.

"Mrs. Bentley's ſurpriſe," continued Somers, "naturally excited my aſtoniſhment.—I aſked her where Clariſſa was gone? She replied, that a man had brought a meſſage, ſignifying that I ſhould be happy to ſee her on ſome particular buſineſs at the lodge, and would not detain her five minutes.

"This information alarmed me, and I replied, no ſuch meſſage was ſent by me.

"Mrs.

"Mrs. Bentley's fears were now ſo much increaſed, that I found it difficult to diſſuade her from going, ill as ſhe was, in ſearch of her.

"I quieted her fears by ſtating that ſhe muſt have miſunderſtood Clariſſa, and that it was you who had requeſted her company inſtead of me, and promiſed immediately to repair here in ſearch of her."

"Good Heaven," exclaimed Auguſta, "what can have become of her! I am quite concerned.—Do haſten back.—Perhaps ſhe has returned; and if ſhe ſhould, or if you receive any letter from Theodore, or other information relative to him, permit me to hope you will take the earlieſt opportunity of communicating it to me."

Somers

Somers promiſed to fulfil her requeſt, and as he was anxious to be gone, he took his leave of her and returned to Sir Charles for the ſame purpoſe.

CHAP. VII.

DURING the abſence of Somers the company had been engaged in a warm diſpute.

Freeman had worked up his paſſions to a degree of phrenſy on account of the ſuſpicions he entertained of Sir Thomas, and called him an infamous ſeducer, and a villain.

Sir Thomas, in return, coolly requeſted he would appoint a time to ſettle it in an honourable way.

Freeman inſtantly left the room.

Sir Thomas, taking advantage of his abſence, aſked Sir Charles if the conduct of Freeman did not evidently beſpeak

ſomething more than friendſhip for Clariſſa.

Sir Charles, who had been at a loſs to account for the motives which induced him to eſpouſe her cauſe ſo warmly, began to ſuſpect the reality of the caſe; but was prevented from replying, as Freeman at this time entered the room with two ſwords.

"Now," cried Freeman, "take your choice of them, and we will ſee who ſhall triumph, myſelf in the cauſe of virtue, or you in the cauſe of vice; for, by Heaven, I'll prevent you from ſucceeding in your plans, or loſe my life in the attempt; thus let what will be the event my mind will be at reſt."

Sir Thomas, whoſe cool, deliberate courage was equal to his villany, made choice of one of the ſwords; and, after

 viewing

viewing the point, placed himſelf in a proper attitude: "Come, ſir," cried he, "you ſhall find I will not execute the buſineſs in a ſlovenly manner, but whip through you in an inſtant.—I'll anſwer for it you will ſcarcely feel it."

"We will try that," rejoined Freeman: "you are an excellent bragadocia; you remind me of the Otahetians, defying their enemy with a wry mouth."

Freeman now put himſelf in a poſture of defence.

Sir Charles ſeized his arm, and wreſting the ſword from him, "What is the meaning of this raſhneſs?" cried he; "the active part you take in behalf of the young woman aſtoniſhes me, more particularly as I am inclined to think ſhe has willingly eloped with Theodore.

"You

"You really appear to eſpouſe her cauſe with the warmth of a lover!"

"I have no doubt," rejoined Sir Thomas, "but you have gueſſed the cauſe of his uneaſineſs; and if he were not aſhamed to own it, you would hear him confeſs as much."

This laſt expreſſion was uttered by Sir Th[illegible]r no other purpoſe than thinking [illegible] irritate him to acknowledge it, which could not, he thought, fail of ſerving himſelf eventually.

Freeman immediately fell into the ſnare laid for him.

"Aſhamed!" cried he; "it is my pride to own a lively attachment for her; nor do I know any one more highly deſerving my eſtimation."

Now was the veil torn from the eyes of Sir Charles.

This

This was an event that all his penetration had not been able to difcover.

The open avowal of Freeman difconcerted him, and rendered him unable for a few moments to reply; at length, having recovered his fpeech, he added, "My daughter, fir, would not thank you for the comparifon."

"I did not mean," refumed Freeman, "to detract the merits of my coufin.—She is an amiable character:—equally fo is Mifs Lefley."

"Edward," rejoined Sir Charles, and affuming a ftern afpect, "you have treated me in a manner I had no reafon to expect from you.

"It was your father's wifh and mine, that an union fhould take place between you and Augufta.

"You have visited me for the purpose of carrying this into effect.

"You have imposed on her by an avowal of attachment, while your heart was otherwise engaged, and had the address, likewise, to impose upon me.

"What Augusta's feelings will be when she hears of this alteration in your sentiments, I know not: as to myself, I behold you with abhorrence; and you my depend I shall take the earliest opportunity of acquainting your father of the treatment I have received from you."

"Permit me," said Freeman, "to reply.—Respecting it being my father's wish, I am firmly of opinion, that he never would have thought of such an union, unless it had been proposed by you; nor do I believe he would wish to see it ac-

complifhed unlefs he found it neceffary to my happinefs.

" With refpect to my vifiting you for the purpofe of carrying it into effect, I difclaim the idea. My vifit here was for the purpofe of learning Augufta's fentiments on the fubject, and I have had the happinefs to find them fimilar to my own.

" And as to any deception I have practifed towards you, there is no perfon culpable but yourfelf.

" Inftead of leaving us to the free exercife of our judgment or inclination, you have at all times infifted on the propofed plan in a manner that would admit of no denial, without gaining your difpleafure: I, therefore, thought it moft advifable to fay nothing concerning it, till you fhould

appear determined on its conclufion. In the mean time, I hoped fome unforfeen event would occur, or fome more advantageous offer be made, which would incline you to bear a refufal from me with more patience than you otherwife would do."

"Ungrateful boy!" returned Sir Charles; "it was your happinefs I was confulting equally with my own: I knew Augufta to be an amiable character; I likewife rated your virtues far higher than they now appear to be, and was unwilling that a perfon worthy, as I thought you, fhould be paired with one who did not merit you; for this reafon I came to a determination of beftowing my daughter on you.

"Another reafon is, that I thought it

would be imprudent to ſuffer fifty thouſand pounds, which I have laid by, to go out of the family.

"The recollection of this, on my part, ought to make you bluſh for your conduct; but you are callous to every ſentiment of feeling, and loſt to all ſenſe of gratitude."

Freeman thanked him for his generous intentions, and lamented that it was not in his power to accept his proffered goodneſs.

This reply of Freeman's was dictated by genuine ſincerity; but Sir Charles, who beſt knew his own private reaſons for propoſing the match, imagined it to have been ſpoken with a degree of irony, and therefore reſumed, "Your ſneer, ſir, is upon a par with the reſidue of your con-

duct. I am not neceffitated to endure your contempt, in addition to the infult my family has already received.—

"The fooner, therefore, you can return to your father, the more you will oblige me."

"I will obey your inftructions this inftant," replied Freeman; and immediately ordered his fervant to pack up his apparel, and follow him to Briftol.

At this juncture Somers entered, and finding there had been an altercation between Freeman and Sir Charles, and that the former was preparing to quit the houfe, he ufed his utmoft endeavours to effect a reconcilation, but this could not be accomplifhed.

Somers being ignorant of the caufe of quarrel between them, and hoping ftill to prevail on Freeman to apologife to his

 uncle,

uncle, insisted on his making Cliffdown-lodge his home for a few days.

Freeman accepted the invitation.

Somers then turned to Sir Charles; "I presume, sir," said he, "you will not be offended, if I bring Mr. Freeman here with me in the morning, to breakfast."

"If," replied Sir Charles, "he should by that time think proper to alter his conduct, I shall be glad to see him; but otherwise, I insist upon it, that he never enters the doors again."

Freeman entreated that he might be allowed to take his leave of Augusta, but Sir Charles refused him that gratification; he then turned to Sir Thomas, and requested he would accompany him to the lodge, where they might argue their affair over coolly and dispassionately.

Here, again, Sir Charles thwarted him,

delaring he would not truſt Sir Thomas with ſuch a fool and a madman.

The ſervant now appeared with the portmanteau; and Freeman, after bowing reſpectfully to his uncle, told Sir Thomas he ſhould find a time to thank him for his ſervices.

Sir Charles followed Somers to the door, and aſſured him he ſhould at all times be proud of the honour of his company.

Somers thanked him for the invitation, and retired.

Sir Thomas now completely enjoyed his triumph; his laſt ſuggeſtion concerning Freeman being realiſed, Sir Charles looked upon him as a young man who poſſeſſed a profound ſhare of penetration, and naturally concluded that what he had

had advanced concerning Theodore and Clariffa was equally entitled to credit.

Having grounded himfelf in this belief, he confidered all that had been faid to blacken Sir Thomas as the mere effects of jealoufy in Edward, and want of penetration on the part of Somers; he, therefore, preffed him to ftay a few weeks at his houfe.

Sir Thomas alleged that he fhould be obliged to vifit London, for the purpofe of completing a purchafe which he had in contemplation, with the money Sir Charles had paid him for the eftate; adding, "You know, fir, fo large a fum ought not to remain idle."

In which remark Sir Charles concurred; but, at the fame time, obferved, that two or three days would make no mate-

rial difference, as he wiſhed for his company, and poſſibly it might be agreeable to his daughter, whoſe ſpirits would be relieved by ſociety.

Sir Thomas could not now refuſe with any degree of propriety. He replied it was his intention to remain a few days in the country, in order to expoſe the ill-founded and malicious ſuſpicions that had been raiſed againſt him concerning Miſs Leſley.

In which ſituation I ſhall leave him, while I return to Somers and Freeman.

After quitting Sir Charles, Somers, accompanied by Freeman, haſtened to the lodge, anxiouſly hoping he ſhould hear ſome intelligence of Theodore, but was diſappointed.

He requeſted the meſſenger, who was ſtill in waiting, to make his houſe his

home

home for a few days, as probably fome news might arrive of him.

The man agreed to accept his invitation for the night, but pleaded a neceffity of leaving him on the following day.

Somers ordered accommodation to be got in readinefs for his guefts, and taking Freeman with him, purfued his way towards Mrs. Bentley's cottage.

During their walk Freeman acquainted him with his fentiments in behalf of Clariffa, and affured Somers that it was his intention to have applied to his father for his confent, which would have forwarded his wifhes, as Clariffa refufed to accept him, or attend to his propofal, till he had obtained his approbation.

Somers, who had hitherto been at a lofs to account for the vehemence with which he defended Clariffa and efpoufed

her caufe, now condoled with him, and made ufe of a variety of improbable conjectures tending to her welfare, for the purpofe of fetting his mind at reft by alleviating his fears.

When they arrived at the cottage, they found Mrs. Bentley almoft incapable of uttering a fentence.

Freeman eagerly enquired if fhe had heard of Clariffa.

The old lady anfwered in the negative.

Her long illnefs had nearly reduced her to the verge of the grave, and this laft blow feemed as if it would haften the awful period.

Somers requefted fhe would endeavour to compofe her mind, and fupport herfelf with fortitude. He then requefted Freeman would

would wait on the ferryman, and entreat his wife inſtantly to attend her.

During the abſence of Freeman, Mrs. Bentley pointed to a drawer, and deſired Somers to give it her.

She then delivered to him her will, with the deed which conveyed to her the title to her cottage and garden.

"If you find the dear child," ſaid ſhe, "give her my choiceſt bleſſing with theſe papers;" then burſting into tears, ſhe prayed to Heaven to protect her.

Somers endeavoured to adminiſter comfort to her afflicted mind, by aſſuring her the providence of God was equally able to ſupport her in whatever danger ſhe might be neceſſitated to encounter.

He likewiſe pointed out the impropriety there would be in her remaining alone at

at the cottage, and entreated that ſhe would ſubmit to be removed to his houſe.

She thanked him for his offer, but refuſed it.

"My race is run," ſaid ſhe, "and ſoon will my ſorrows be at reſt.—This laſt ſhock muſt terminate my exiſtence."

Freeman entered with the woman, who promiſed not to leave her.

Somers having made uſe of every argument that friendſhip or religion could dictate to ſoften her grief and revive her hope, took leave of her for the night, promiſing to viſit her early on the enſuing morning.

"Ah, my God!" exclaimed Somers, as he left the threſhold, "what have thoſe to anſwer for, who, to ſatisfy a momentary enjoyment, plunge an innocent cha-

racter

racter into difgrace, and cut the thread of life of this poor but affectionate woman!"

Freeman, much as he was afflicted by the preceding fcene, was not capable of moralizing on it.

Somers had touched a chord that thrilled through his foul, and fhook his frame with horror—he had hinted at the ruin of Clariffa.

Inftead, therefore, of replying in the fame ftrain, he vowed vengeance againft Sir Thomas, unlefs he would difclofe where fhe was.

"It is not," rejoined Somers, "by the ufe of coercive means that you will gain any intelligence of Clariffa.

"Sir Thomas is not afraid to meet your fword; and I am confident he would expire fooner than be compelled to confefs.

"Neither

"Neither will entreaty on your part avail, as he is dead to every ſentiment of virtue; and your eagerneſs to obtain her would only enhance the value of his prey.

"Sir Thomas, likewiſe, poſſeſſes an uncommon ſhare of art, yet I ſhould preſume at this period he will be too intent on following his own inclinations, to place that proper guard on his actions that he otherwiſe would do.

"The moſt adviſable ſtep you can purſue, is to ſet a ſpy upon his conduct."

Freeman approved of the advice, and as ſoon as he reached the houſe, he deſired his ſervant to attend him.

He knew that Sir Thomas had not been ſufficiently in the company of this man to recollect his features; he therefore furniſhed him with a ſuit of his own clothes,

and

and a ſupply of money, deſiring him to gain information when Sir Thomas ſhould leave his uncle's houſe, and to follow him. If he purſued a journey, then to take a poſt-chaiſe or ſaddle-horſe, as might beſt ſuit his convenience, or anſwer the end propoſed.

That ſhould he be able to gain a ſight of, or intelligence concerning Clariſſa, to ſend word to Cliffdown-lodge where ſhe was ſituated.

The man having received his inſtruc-tions departed.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

FREEMAN ſpent a ſleepleſs night; the anxiety of his ſpirits not permitting him to enjoy repoſe.

He formed a thouſand conjectures concerning what had become of Clariſſa; and at length recollecting Mrs. Grapes, blamed himſelf for not having ſearched her houſe.

He ſuſpected, that ſhe muſt have been the perſon who informed Sir Thomas of Clariſſa in the firſt inſtance, and dreaded leſt ſhe ſhould again be under her roof.

"Perhaps," cried he, "the villain is at this time endeavouring, aſſiſted by that miſcreant woman, to ſeduce her."

Mad

Mad with the idea, he roſe in a ſtate of diſtraction at the dawn of day, and quitting the houſe reſolved to viſit Mrs. Gripe.

For this purpoſe he walked to Briſtol, and waited in the ſtreet till he obſerved a ſervant opening the ſhutters.

Having obtained admittance, he locked the ſtreet-door, put the key in his pocket, and proceeded to ſearch the apartments.

The lady abbeſs was alarmed on receiving intelligence of his breaking the doors.

She threw a morning-gown on her ſhoulders, and made her appearance. She ſolemnly proteſted her innocence, and alleged that ſhe had neither heard of, or ſeen Sir Thomas, for ſome weeks paſt.

That he was the moſt unlikely perſon

in

in the world to be guilty of ſuch a practice, as he, at that time, had Sophia Bridport in keeping, to whom he was extremely partial.

Freeman, not placing a firm reliance on her aſſeverations, inſiſted ſtill on ſearching.

Mrs. Gripe repreſented the impropriety of ſuch a ſtep, as there were ſeveral gentlemen in the houſe. The more ſhe profeſſed a reluctance, the more was he determined to examine the apartments, and therefore, in defiance of her entreaties, he proceeded in his ſearch.

Where he could not gain admittance, he ſet his foot againſt the doors and burſt them open.

This created a general uproar in the houſe, and he was preſently ſurrounded by priggiſh ſhopmen, honeſt tars, limbs

of the law, ſmug parſons, officers in the army, and methodiſt preachers.

The ſhopman firſt addreſſed him, by enquiring the cauſe of this intruſion.

Freeman explained.

The ſhopman conceived he acted highly improper, in endeavouring to deprive the city of its trade. He profeſſed himſelf a well-wiſher to trade in general; and if the young lady had an inclination to ſet up on her own bottom, he conceived it iniquitous to prevent her;—declared there was a dearth of the commodity in the city, and therefore it did become the inhabitants to import, or manufacture, a ſufficient quantity of the article for their own uſe.

The honeſt tar was of a different opinion.

He conceived there always would be a

ſupply, without promoting the ſmuggling trade; and if the gentleman had a freight which he had reſerved for his own uſe, he did not ſee why it ſhould be purloined from him, to be conſumed by every puppy; and applied to the parſon for the truth of his declaration.

"Why, really," replied the ſmug parſon, "taking it in a moral point of view, it is very wrong.—We are commanded not to covet our neighbour's goods, nor any thing that is his.

"Now, as this gentleman claims her as his own, it is highly immoral, and ſtrictly againſt both the laws of God and man, to act upon ſuch a principle."

"Hold your tongue about the law," cried the attorney; "what ſhould a parſon know about law?

"He may have loſt the young lady,

or he may not.—But of this I am certain, that he broke open my door, nor can I find *my* girl. Therefore I'll ſerve him with a clauſum fregit, for the aſſault and battery; and I'll be hanged if I do not bring an action of trover, to recover her from him that has found her, and after that, maintain my action for the mean profits during the time ſhe was in his poſſeſſion; and when I catch her, it ſhall go hard with me if I do not ſerve her with a fieri facias or a certiorari."

"Arra," cried the officer, who was an Iriſhman, "don't be after bodering us with your ſuper ſnajums, clauſum fregets, fiery faces, or ſiſſararoes.

"The gentleman, you hear, has loſt his lady, and ſuſpects his friend has ran away with her.

"Take my advice, ſir," ſaid he, addreſſ-
ing

ing himſelf to Freeman, "call him out, and, damn me, pink him; whip him through the lungs, and get the ſecret from him dead or alive."

"Don't ſwear, friend," ſaid the methodiſt preacher; "it ſhocks my ears to hear your profaneneſs;—the Lord will certainly viſit you for it;—you forget the commandment that forbids you to ſwear."

"And by Jaſus," cried the officer, "you forget the commandment that ſays, 'Thou ſhalt not be after committing adultery.'"

"I abhor the crime," ſaid the methodiſt preacher; "the girl, I believe, is not another man's wife; and therefore my crime is only ſimple fornication, which I truſt, through mercy, will be overlooked.

"God knoweth my ſpirit wiſheth to

ſerve him, but my fleſh is weak.—The body periſheth after my deceaſe, but the foul liveth for ever.—Now it is not my ſoul that erreth, but my body: as therefore my ſoul is pure, I have nothing to fear; and that it is pure I am able to know, for I have received full conviction that I am one of the elect; having the indwellings of the ſpirit, it is a certain ſign the Lord hath forgiven the ſins of the fleſh, and that I never can finally fall."

Perhaps my reader will be greatly ſurpriſed, that I ſhould expoſe ſo ſanctified a perſon as a methodiſt preacher in ſuch a place as I have been deſcribing; but I have ſtrong reaſons to doubt, whether he was not, in reality, the worſt character amongſt them.

In vindication, therefore, of myfelf, permit me to digrefs, while I relate the rife and progrefs of a methodift preacher.

Figure to yourfelf a fhoemaker, mounted in a back garrat, with a fcolding wife, and feveral fqualling children.

He cannot endure home after the hours of labour, on account of the ferenading of his Xantippe.

His earnings too fmall to admit of drunkennefs, or even to take a folitary pint in a public-houfe, and much lefs to vifit a theatre or other place of amufement.

To walk the ftreets is but forry employment: he, therefore, to beguile an hour, ftrolls into a methodift meeting.

There he hears an enthufiaftic ranter, haranguing an illiterate audience; and with a finging, whining tone of voice, cal-

culated to inspire the same kind of enthusiasm, he draws the attention of his itinerant hearers; and afterwards sums up the whole with a hymn, set to a drawling, stupifying tune, in which every fervent bigot joins with such devotion, that the poor shoe-maker cannot help catching a spark of the fire which actuates the residue.

He now associates with none but methodists; enslaves himself by talking and thinking of the doctrine professed by them.

He goes again and again, till he, by constant repetition, feels the same enthusiasm as themselves.

This, he avows, is the pure spirit of God that has taken possession of him; declares himself a chosen vessel, predestinated from the first, and one of God's elect.

He

He tortures texts of ſcripture to prove that God has predeſtinated ſome to be damned, and ſome to be ſaved;—amongſt the latter he is ſure to reckon himſelf.

Proud of his new ſyſtem, and declaring he has received a call from the Moſt High to preach his word, he plants himſelf upon ſome drift-hill, thrown up beſide a public road, and preaches to the paſſers by.—Some ſtop through motives of curioſity, and, perhaps, ſome ſtragglers of his own faith neglect their work, while they liſten to him.

He harangues with ardour till he ſweats in the cauſe, and foams at the mouth; then, concluding with one of his hymns, as uſual, informs his hearers he ſhall again hold forth on ſuch a day.

Thus he very ſoon forms a ſmall congre-

congregation; and, perhaps, prevails on a farmer to lend him his barn.

Here he collects money, and by degrees gets his hearers to be bound for him for more.

A chapel is then built, where, by collections and feats, he pays off the expence, and it becomes his own.

One of his principal arguments againſt the eſtabliſhed miniſters of the church is, "that they felt not as he did; were not moved to preach by the holy ſpirit, but by the hope of a rich living."—Yet will you ſee this cormorant lay out his chapel in galleries and pews, ſo as not to leave ſtanding room for a dozen individuals; thus making every perſon pay who hears him. And if you remonſtrate with him, he replies from ſcripture,

"The

" The labourer is worthy of his hire;" or " See that ye forſake not the levite, &c." The old text that he always foiſted againſt the church miniſters, which ſays, " Take ye neither purſe nor ſcrip with you, &c." is totally forgotten by him.

If he collected nothing from his hearers but what was neceſſary for the ſupport of his meeting, and attended to his original trade, he would ſhew that his ends were not mercenary, and that his preaching was dictated from conſcientious motives; but he now leaves off mending ſoles of ſhoes, and attends only to converting ſouls of chriſtians, that his chapel may be well filled; and what with his pews, galleries, and collections, he is able to keep his carriage!

Thriving profeſſion!!

Perhaps, for the purpoſe of keeping

his flock together, or increafing it by others, he turns baptift, and brings his audience to the fame perfuafion.

Then oppofite his pulpit is funk a fefpool, where tallow-chandlers and pretty milliners, butchers and ladies' maids, taylors and bafket-women, are foufed one after the other in the face of the congregation, that their fouls may thereby find a fafe paffport to heaven.

But to what will not bigotry fubject the enthufiaftic and mifguided?

Reader, if ever you had entered what they call their Holy of Holies, where the felect out of the elected are gathered together, and obferved them at their prayer meetings, you would then be able to witnefs their enthufiafm.

I have feen a journeyman taylor on his knees praying with the utmoft devotion; —his

—his features diſtorted, his body in perpetual motion, his hands quivering as if ſhook by the palſy, and large drops of perſpiration ſtanding on his forehead; and when aſked the reaſon, after his fit was over, replied, "he was full of the ſpirit."

If they loſe this ſenſation for ſome hours, as will frequently be the caſe, they declare themſelves in the valley of diſpair, and that God whips them for their paſt offences; but if they are of a conſtitution to endure the perpetual ardour, and are able to provoke it, then they ſay, "God dandles them on his knee as he would a young child."

Reader, do not bluſh that men ſhould thus deſcend into ſuch wild extravagances, but conſider they have taken leave of their ſenſes, and let it plead their apology.

This

This enthusiastic fire assures them they are the elect, and never can finally fall. Now, although there are many whom reason and common sense oblige to recant from their notions, yet does it not convince the residue: they say he was a deceiver; that the spirit never visited him; and select a text, "He went out from us, because he was not of us," and the poor enlightened soul is termed a backslider, is despised by some, and pitied by others.

By entering their Holy of Holies, attending their prayer meetings, self-examinations, or love-feasts, you will become convinced that their enthusiastic notions compel them to any thing.

One text I cannot help remarking, which they bring in defence of their faith,

faith, "Narrow is the way, and few there be that find it;" thereby concluding, that the methodifts, who are but few when compared to the eftablifhed church, and far lefs when compared with Mahometans, Jews, &c. &c. are the identical few that are the elect, and are to be faved; forgetting that the Arians, Socinians, Moravians, Unitarians, &c. &c. who the methodifts declare will be finally damned, are infinitely lefs in number than themfelves, and thereby, according to their own reckoning, themfelves ftand a worfe chance than do either of thefe fects.

If they commit an error by getting their maid with child, or fomething equally immoral, they have a wonderful method of bringing themfelves off, by declaring, in a canting, whining manner,

ner, "The Lord let them go, to ſhew them what they were."

It is not, therefore, ſurpriſing that ſo godly a ſet of men ſhould err, ſeeing that to the Author of all goodneſs they attribute their vices.

Is it therefore ſtrange, that a character of this deſcription ſhould be found in a houſe of ill fame?

It is, however, no more ſtrange than true, and when diſcovered, it will go hard with them if they do not find a text from ſcripture to paliate their vices; and therefore, when the methodiſt preacher obſerved the eyes of every one fixed upon him, he called out, "Let him without ſin caſt the firſt ſtone! Chriſt did not come to call the righteous but ſinners to repentance."

Freeman

Freeman turned from this motley aſſemblage of devotees, and after carefully inveſtigating every apartment, and meeting with no ſucceſs, he relinquiſhed the ſearch; then turning to Mrs. Gripe, he gave her ſome money to repair the damage her locks and bolts had ſuſtained.

Freeman called to his recollection the diſtreſs Mr. Bridport had undergone, through the loſs of his daughter; and Mrs. Gripe having mentioned that Sir Thomas had her ſtill in keeping, he endeavoured to prevail on her to mention the place where ſhe lived.

Mrs. Gripe heſitated for ſome time; but at length, upon Freeman's repeated entreaty, ſhe informed him that ſhe reſided at a ſmall houſe near the London road beyond Reading, and paſſed by the

name

name of Thompſon, adding at the ſame time, " If Sir Thomas thinks he can manage his concerns better without my aſſiſtance than with it, let him take the conſequences."

Freeman did not underſtand the meaning of her expreſſion, being too much agitated for the fate of Clariſſa to inveſtigate it, but concluded Sir Thomas had given her ſome offence. He now left her and returned to Somers, whom he found ſitting in his parlour in ſerious contemplation.

Somers had riſen early, and purſued his way to Mrs. Bentley's cottage; the door was opened by the woman he had left to attend her.

She requeſted he would immediately go up ſtairs, as the old lady was conſiderably altered for the worſe.

Somers found her in the agonies of death.

She

She grafped his hand in one of hers, while fhe laid her other hand upon her breaft, and faintly articulated "Oh! my heart!" Shortly after fhe heaved a deep figh, and expired.

Somers fat a few minutes befide her bed, not knowing fhe was lifelefs, till perceiving ftrong marks of diffolution on her countenance, he defired the woman to bring him a glafs, and applying it to her lips, found no appearance of breath upon it; and taking up her hand he endeavoured to difcover if there were any pulfe, but all vibration had ceafed.

He viewed this awful fcene with calm ferenity, while his foul was wrapt up in contemplation of his Creator. "God," faid he, "is good in all his works: how infinite muft her blifs be, when taken from

MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARAS

from this ſcene of ſorrow, and tranſlated to endleſs happineſs !"

The woman who attended heard the words that fell from the lips of Somers, and rejoined, " God is good for certain; but how much better would it have been if Miſs Clariſſa had not left her? ſhe would then have had no occaſion for ſorrow."

" You appear," ſaid Somers, " to arraign the wiſdom of Providence, and I fear there are in the world too many like you. I will remind you of two lines I have ſomewhere heard, and which perfectly agree with my opinion:

' Even croſſes from his Sovereign hand
Are bleſſings in diſguiſe.'

" Clariſſa has undoubtedly been taken from

from this place by improper means, yet it may ſo happen that it ſhall be the moſt fortunate occurrence of her life; but whether it is or not, of this you muſt be ſatisfied, her Creator is as able to protect her wherever ſhe may be, as he was when ſhe remained under this humble roof.

"Never, therefore, murmer at his diſpenſations. It ſhocks my ears when I hear a worm of earth arraign the wiſdom of the Deity."

Somers deſired her to remain with the corpſe, and he would give orders for the funeral.

Having locked up her drawers, he returned in contemplative mood to his houſe.

He next examined her will, to diſcover if ſhe had pointed out any particular place for her interment; but ſhe had

been

been ſilent on that head; he therefore determined on burying her in the pariſh where ſhe had reſided.

Mrs. Bentley had bequeathed to Clariſſa the cottage and its contents, as likewiſe the ſmall ſum of money ſhe had by her, which ſum he was able to aſcertain without ſearching her drawers, as ſhe had mentioned it in a paper annexed to her will.

She had on the day preceding her deceaſe received her widows' penſion, which was inſerted; but the fifty pounds that Freeman had incloſed as if ſent by Morris was not put down, he therefore concluded Clariſſa had it in her poſſeſſion.

While he was contemplating on this circumſtance, Freeman entered.

Somers informed him of the death of Mrs. Bently, and produced the will.

Freeman was happy to find Clariſſa

had the fifty pounds in her poſſeſſion, as in caſe of neceſſity it might befriend her.

He then related his adventure of the morning, and likewiſe mentioned the place where Sophia Bridport was to be found, and under what name ſhe paſſed.

This Somers carefully put down, for the purpoſe of communicating it to her father.

Freeman now declared his intention of viſiting London, as he wiſhed to call on a friend who was intimate with Sir Thomas, and who he concluded would give him every information concerning Clariſſa, provided Sir Thomas ſhould write and inform him, or if he ſhould have ordered her to be conveyed to his houſe in town.

Freeman's ſervant now made his ap-

pearance, and informed him that Sir Thomas had ſlept at Sir Charles's.

Freeman deſired him if he ſhould gain any intelligence of Clariſſa to write to him in London, and likewiſe to Mr. Somers at the ſame time.

Somers, who knew the ſtate of Freeman's mind, did not endeavour to diſſuade him from proſecuting his plan; therefore, after taking ſome refreſhment, Freeman departed.

The meſſenger likewiſe who came for Theodore took his leave, after adviſing Somers, if he ſhould return, to detain him at his houſe, aſſuring him that he might rely upon it that no information ſent to Mr. Quibble's would be able to affect him.

Somers being now once more left to himſelf, recalled to his mind the events

of the paſt week. Events which, although diſtreſſing in their nature, had alleviated his mind, by keeping it employed for the welfare of others, or feeling for other's ſorrows, which in part deprived him of the recollection of his own.

Yet having now no one with him, he conſidered it a favourable opportunity to viſit the temple, and devote an hour to himſelf.

But, as if fate had reſolved he ſhould have no leiſure for unavailing melancholy, as he left his door he was accoſted by Mr. Bridport, who came in conſequence of the invitation he received, and to pour forth the tribute of gratitude.

Before I introduce him, it will be neceſſary to give ſome account of his family, and the tranſaction of Sir Thomas which I have before hinted at.

CHAP. IX.

MR. BRIDPORT was the ſon of a clergyman, who had brought him up to the church, in expectation that he would ſucceed to the living then enjoyed by him.

Bridport had ſcarcely attained the age of twenty-one before he became enamoured with the daughter of a captain in the army, who had no other exiſtence than his pay.

Bridport's father was too indulgent a parent to oppoſe the inclination of his ſon, and therefore conſented to their union.

This event was ſucceeded by the death of

of the lady's father, who had been for ſome time in an ill ſtate of health.

Bridport ſold his effects at his deceaſe, which put him in poſſeſſion of about five hundred pounds.

The intereſt of this ſum was too trifling to exiſt upon; he, therefore, turned his attention to renting ſome land, the profits of which he flattered himſelf would make up the deficiency, till the deceaſe of his father, at which time he expected to be promoted to the living then held by him.

It was not long before an eligible farm offered itſelf upon the eſtate belonging to the father of Sir Thomas Blandford.

This farm he engaged; beautified the houſe, and took up his reſidence in it.

He ſoon found his circumſtances getting worſe inſtead of better.

He could not, as a clergyman, ſtoop to the menial offices a farmer muſt neceſſarily be engaged in; as ſuch, he was obliged to entruſt the chief management of it to others who daily defrauded him.

After he had been ſettled in this farm about two years, he had the misfortune to loſe his father, and immediately wrote to the gentleman in whoſe gift the living was, requeſting to be promoted to it; but received in reply, that it had been long promiſed to a clergyman of his acquaintance.

He was not prepared to meet with ſuch a diſappointment.

In this emergency, he began ſeriouſly to conſider what was beſt to be done.

His father had bequeathed him a thouſand pounds.

This, together with the leaſe of his farm,

farm, and fome ftock, was all that he could reckon himfelf worth. The former fum of five hundred pounds having been expended on his houfe, and through improper management.

After maturely deliberating, he refolved to purfue his farming fcheme, and to redouble his attention.

His wife now brought him a daughter, but did not furvive its birth.

This was a fevere blow to him.

He loved her with fincerity, and out of refpect to her memory, declared he never would again enter into the marriage ftate, but attend to the education of his child, whom he named Sophia.

Yet in this he was difappointed, for Lady Blandford, the prefent Sir Thomas's mother, having feen it, became fo partial to the infant, that fhe made a

propofal to Bridport, offering to take the child under her protection.

This offer, fo material to his child's welfare and future profpects in life, he could not think of rejecting, and therefore parted from her when fhe was little more than two years of age.

Year after year Bridport found himfelf getting backwards.

His thoufand pounds was reduced to the laft hundred; and this he confidered the more furprifing, as he held his farm at the fame rent it had been let for thirty years before; at which rent the laft tenant had lived in refpectability, brought up a large family, and been enabled to lay by money.

Having mentioned this to a friend of his, he was anfwered, that he fhould do as the laft farmer had done, clap his

ſhoulder to the wheel, and he would ſpeedily diſcover the difference.

This plan he determined to adopt, and began by diſcharging the bailiff, and ſome extra hands, whom he thought he could do without.

He ſoon diſcovered theſe men had been exiſting on his profits, by groſsly impoſing on him.

He conſtantly attended his men, and found, aſſiſted by the eye of a maſter, that three men would get through as much work as ſix would formerly.

His corn yielded more per acre, and ſold for more in the market. The reaſon was obvious;—he attended it himſelf, and therefore received its full value.

He was now enabled to live without further aſſiſtance, which heretofore had not been the caſe.

Sophia, as ſhe grew up, was univerſally admired.

Lady Blandford was ſo extravagantly partial to her, as never to be happy out of her ſight.

By the time ſhe had reached her fifteenth year, young Blandford returned from the univerſity.

He could not behold Sophia, in whom was blended a variety of pleaſing accompliſhments, without feeling the force of them.

Lady Blandford obſerved the conſtant attention paid to Sophia by her ſon.

Her partiality for him led her to conclude it was merely as a compliment meant to herſelf, and the effects of a polite and liberal education.

She had never once conceived he had formed an attachment for her; if ſhe had,

her pride would have ſuggeſted to her ſome means of keeping them apart.

Blandford had, therefore, the pleaſure of her ſociety whenever he deſired it; and there is little doubt, had ſhe been a perſon of family and fortune, but that he would have ſolicited her hand.

His father, Sir Thomas Blandford, dying ſhortly after, he became poſſeſſed of the title and a large eſtate unincumbered.

Lady Blandford being adviſed, for the relief of her ſpirits, to viſit London, ſhe prevailed upon her ſon to accompany her, intending likewiſe to take Sophia with her.

Bridport, whoſe only proſpect of happineſs was centered in his child, waited on Lady Blandford, and earneſtly intreated her to permit his daughter to reſide with him

during her ſtay in London, alleging that he ſhould feel himſelf extremely uneaſy at her being removed to ſo great a diſtance.

Lady Blandford, taking into conſideration the feelings of a parent, conſented to his requeſt, although with evident reluctance.

Sophia, therefore, for the firſt time ſince ſhe was two years old, took up her reſidence at her father's.

Sir Thomas ſhortly after his arrival in London was ſurrounded by young men of faſhion and fortune, who led him into various exceſſes.

By them he was taught to eſteem fortune only as it afforded the means of adding to his pleaſures; and having laid it down as a maxim, that a man had an undoubted right to enjoy himſelf in any courſe, however vicious, provided his

his eſtate was adequate, it quickly ruined the principles of virtue his father had been at ſo much pains to inculcate.

During the winter, Lady Blandford, who had never been able to recover her ſpirits ſince the death of her huſband, paid the debt of nature.

This awful event, for a ſhort time, checked Sir Thomas in his career of vice; but time and company ſoon obliterated the recollection of it.

He now began to think on what means he ſhould exerciſe, to gain Sophia Bridport.

He had ſhared in the careſſes of many different women, but no one had been able to ſhare his heart;—that remained with Sophia.

Whenever he had harboured an idea

of obtaining her by improper means, the recollection of the affection his mother retained for her always checked him, and prevented his putting ſuch a plan in practice, but her death having quieted his fears on that head, he had now, on his ſide, no obſtacle to oppoſe.

Frequently, as he ſat ruminating on his plans, his affection for her prompted him to turn his thoughts on matrimony.

She was deſcended from a clergyman on one ſide, and a military officer on the other; ſhe had received a brilliant education, and was, in all other reſpects, truly amiable; but ſtill ſhe was a farmer's daughter. The idea of what the world would think of ſuch a degrading match rendered it impoſſible for him to put it in practice.

He knew, from a thoufand occurrences, that Sophia had an unalterable attachment for him.

This he concluded might affift him in his defign of taking her into keeping. But how he was to undermine thofe principles of virtue which his mother had inftilled, he knew not.

She had ever conducted herfelf towards him with the greateft propriety. Her modefty of carriage was a trait diftinguifhable in her above all others, and made him dread the neceffity there appeared to be of making her an improper propofal, left it fhould prompt her never again to truft herfelf in his company.

Upon weighing all thefe circumftances, he determined to leave London and vifit her, trufting that time and opportunity would

would afford him ſome unguarded moment to forward his deſigns.

One other circumſtance occurred to his mind, which, if removed, would materially aſſiſt in promoting his deſigns;—this was, the independence of Bridport.

He lived within the compaſs of his earnings, and owed no one any thing.

Sir Thomas knew that Bridport had a ſtrong deſire to ſpeculate in the purchaſe of farming ſtock, but had hitherto been unable for want of the means.

Theſe means he determined to aſſiſt him with, as it would then afford him an opportunity of acting his own will reſpecting Sophia, without dreading the reſentment of her father, who would be awed into ſilence, leſt Sir Thomas ſhould put his demand in force againſt him.

When,

When, therefore, he arrived at his feat, he invited Bridport, talked freely with him about his concerns, and offered him the ufe of his purfe whenever occafion fhould require.

Bridport teftified his gratitude for this apparently generous offer, and promifed, in return, to give him every fecurity within his power for any fum he might advance.

It was not long before Bridport felt an inclination to put his friendfhip to the teft.

A perfon had lately died who rented the farm adjoining to his, the leafe of which, and ftock on the premifes, were advertifed to be fold.

Bridport wifhed to add this farm to his own; but as it would require nearly a thoufand pounds to complete the purchafe, a fum which he was not in poffef-

fion

ſion of, he could not attain it without the proffered aſſiſtance of Sir Thomas.

He therefore waited on him, and diſtantly hinted at the buſineſs in queſtion.

"Speak out, man," cried Sir Thomas; "you want the money to purchaſe it; believe me it is but a trifle between friends: I will anſwer your draft to any amount."

Bridport knew not how ſufficiently to expreſs his gratitude.

"Say no more about it," replied Sir Thomas; "all I ſhall require of you in return is a warrant of attorney for the amount, and a depoſit of your leaſes by way of collateral ſecurity, that in caſe of death I may, if I think proper, recover the money."

Bridport made not the leaſt heſitation.

The leaſe and ſtock were purchaſed for

nine

nine hundred pounds, which Sir Thomas advanced; the deed was then executed, and the leaſe delivered with it.

Now did Sir Thomas conclude would be the moſt favourable opportunity for putting his deſigns in execution.

He had frequently ſince his return viſited Sophia, renewed his profeſſions of inviolable attachment, and obtained from her an aſſurance that her heart had long been in his poſſeſſion, and would unalterably continue the ſame.

She had, notwithſtanding, noticed during the profeſſions of Sir Thomas that he never mentioned marriage, and therefore took an opportunity when they were alone to ſpeak on the diſparity of their fortune; and fearing he meant to act otherwiſe than honourably with her, ſhe likewiſe dwelt on the impropriety ſhe

was guilty of, in attending to his addreſſes, before he had conſulted her father upon it.

Sir Thomas ſaw the drift of this converſation; he aſſured her in return that he ſhould the firſt convenient opportunity ſend for, and acquaint Mr. Bridport of his intentions, which were to make her honourably his, and pledged his life for the truth of his aſſertion.

Sir Thomas did not mind uttering a falſhood to a fine woman, but could not bear to be detected in it; and therefore generally made uſe of ſuch expreſſions as would admit of an explanation either way. Thus when he was ſome time afterwards reminded by her of his promiſe, "True," replied he, "I did ſay as much; but could you imagine I meant marriage? No: far from it. It was not my inten-

tion

tion to ſhackle either you or myſelf in the trammels of matrimony.

"You would then have had a claim upon me and my fortune, and of courſe had no occaſion to truſt to my honour.

"There needs no legal bond in an honourable connection, as it exiſts on the mere faith of each party, or otherwiſe it would loſe its name."

Sophia having received the before-mentioned declaration, acquainted her father with it; who after teſtifying his ſurpriſe, ſignified his intention of ſpeaking with Sir Thomas. To this ſhe objected, thinking it would be more adviſable to wait till the propoſal came from the other quarter; but Bridport perſiſting in his determination, ſhe felt a neceſſity of acquainting Sir Thomas with what had paſſed between herſelf and her father.

Sir Thomas, on the receipt of this intelligence, ſaw there was no time to be loſt; he therefore viſited her when he knew her father was abſent from home, and requeſted her to walk with him.

This ſhe conſented to: he then informed her that he was making ſome improvements in his houſe, and that he ſhould be highly flatterred if ſhe would give her opinion of it; adding, that as they ſhould ſhortly be upon a more tender footing, and as it would be her ſummer reſidence, ſhe ought to be conſulted on it.

Sophia objected to viſiting the houſe unleſs accompanied by her father, or ſome female friend.

Sir Thomas reproached her with a want of confidence, and argued ſtrongly

to

to prove that it plainly teſtified a want of affection.

This was far from being the caſe with Sophia, nor could ſhe endure that he ſhould harbour ſo unjuſt an idea.

To obliterate it therefore from his mind, ſhe at length, although with evident reluctance, conſented.

CHAP. X.

THEY ſhortly reached the houſe; he then ſhewed her into various apartments, ſome of which he was having new furniſhed.

This he had the addreſs to perſuade her was for her future accommodation; alleging, that he could not think of introducing her as his partner to the houſe furniſhed in its former antique ſtyle.

During her walk to the various apartments ſhe had hitherto ſeen, Sir Thomas had conducted himſelf with the utmoſt decorum.

Nor could ſhe avoid bluſhing for her unjuſt ſuſpicions, when he ſhewed her

the various bed-rooms, and did not request her to enter them; but contented himſelf with her remaining at the door of each room, while he pointed out the improvements.

This conduct in him aſſured her that he had no improper ideas; and being fearful leſt he ſhould again upbraid her with a want confidence, when ſhe aſcended the ſecond floor, ſhe became leſs cautious, and ſuffered him to lead her through the different rooms.

At length they arrived at the moſt remote apartment in the houſe, where he conſidered himſelf out of the hearing of his ſervants.

This room was chiefly occupied as a bed-room for the reception of the upper ſervants of any company that might viſit his houſe.

Having entered the room, he ſhut the door without her knowledge, while ſhe was ſurveying a trifling alteration that had been made, then advancing towards her, he ſaid, "Well, my dear girl, I have now ſhewn you the various apartments that will ſhortly be your's, permit me to welcome you here," at the ſame time placing his arm round her waiſt and ſaluting her.

Sophia bluſhed, and attempted, although not with force, to diſengage herſelf from him.

He repeated the ſalute, ſtill holding her, and afterwards imprinted a kiſs on her neck.

Sophia had hitherto borne his careſſes with patience, fearful leſt he ſhould again accuſe her of harbouring unjuſt ſuſpicions, and interpret it to a want of affection; but

but on obſerving his eyes flaſhing with amorous fire, his countenance animated in the extreme, and the liberty he took to ſalute her boſom, ſhe now ſeriouſly endeavoured to diſengage herſelf.

In doing this her neckerchief became unpinned, and expoſed to his view thoſe ſnowy hillocks that would have tempted a methodiſtical ſaint, from the Holy of Holies, to have partaken of a love-feaſt ſo deſirable to his nature.

Again did he imprint them with kiſſes, and took her up in his arms for the purpoſe of conveying her to the bed.

Sophia broke from his hold, and endeavoured to reach the door; but he was too quick for her.

She then threw herſelf on her knees, and entreated he would permit her to depart.

Sir Thomas ſwore he could not, that his feelings had ſo far got the better of his reaſon, as to render it impoſſible.

"Are we not," cried he, "the ſame as man and wife? nothing is wanting but the ceremony; why, therefore, this want of confidence in me?" Again he ſeized her in his arms, and, as ſhe was going to ſpeak, ſtopt her mouth with kiſſes, and then endeavoured to force her to the bed.

Sophia, in reaching out her hand to lay hold of the window curtain, in order that ſhe might check his progreſs, drove her arm through a ſquare of glaſs, and in drawing it back was ſeverely cut.

This accident was not noticed by either of them.

Sir Thomas was too much fixed on his purpoſe, and ſhe too much terrified, to pay the leaſt attention to it.

In a moment he threw her on the bed, and proceeded to take unwarrantable liberties.

She ſtruggled, and at length ſcreamed with terror.

But not all her efforts to get free, nor all her terrific ſcreams, could have any effect on the paſſions of Sir Thomas; he concluded they were too far removed from the ſervants to be heard, and therefore accompliſhed his abominable purpoſe.

Yet before he was able to riſe from the bed, two of his men ſervants, who had obſerved the broken glaſs from the window fall into the area, and who, as they were going up the ſtairs to aſcertain the cauſe of the accident, heard her ſcreams, entered the room.

The elder ſervant, who had lived in the

family many years, and had known her from an infant, immediately ran to her affiftance, and lifted her up, but fhe threw herfelf upon the floor in fpeechlefs agony of mind.

The man then turning to Sir Thomas, with honeft indignation imprinted on his features, reproached him for his infamous conduct: "Was it for this," cried he, "my old lady brought up this amiable girl from an infant; nurtured her in her bofom as her own child; educated her, fo as to render her fit company for the beft of fociety?

"Could fhe now rife from her grave, and behold her fon, reducing this, her favourite, to infamy, how would fhe execrate you!"

Sir Thomas, who plainly faw the rafhnefs of his own conduct had placed him within

their

their power, endeavoured to ſoften the buſineſs, and incautiouſly obſerved, that they had appointed a time for their marriage, and therefore there was no harm done.

"No harm done!" exclaimed the man; "have you not behaved like a brute and a monſter; committed a rape under the maſk of affection?

"Had you even eſteemed her, you never could have endured her tears, her entreaties, and her dreadful cries.

"I know there are ſome fond couples who when left together, time and opportunity ſuiting, and their inclinations mutual, have degraded themſelves by committing error; and where truth and affection dwells, that error is repaired by marriage; but this is too horrid to be brought in compariſon with it."

Sir Thomas requested the company of the men in another room; and having arrived there, he declared himself willing to make all the amends in his power, and requested them not to mention the circumstance.

"What amends?" cried the old man.

"I mean to marry her," replied Sir Thomas; "but you know me too well to suppose I will be forced into such a step; it must and shall be my own act."

"Don't say it," replied the man, "but do it."

"It is my intention," replied Sir Thomas; "be you but secret."

"Act like a man of honour, of feeling, and a christian," replied the old man, "and you will have no reason to complain of me."

Sir Thomas then offered them money, which

which the fervant who had hitherto been only a fpectator received, but the old man fcorned to accept.

Having obtained from them a promife of fecrecy, he prevailed on them to return down ftairs, left fome others fhould come up, and more particularly as he wifhed to fpeak fome words of comfort to Sophia.

He retuned to the wretched girl, who was then fitting on the floor, her hand leaning againft the bedftead, and defpair figured in her countenance.

Sir Thomas raifed her in his arms, and feating her on a chair, endeavoured to leffen her affliction by promifes of truth, and declaring he was afhamed of his paft conduct.

Sophia was inconfolable; fhe infifted on immediately being allowed to return to her father.

Sir Thomas reprefented the impropriety of fuch a ftep at prefent ; and then difcovering her arm which was cut by the glafs, he lamented the accident, and taking out his handkerchief tied it round the wound.

Scarcely had he finifhed tying up her arm, before the fervant, who had received the bribe, and whofe name was William, knocked at the door, and informed him that Mr. Bridport was walking up towards the houfe.

"Oh, my father!" exclaimed Sophia, and rofe from the chair for the purpofe of running to meet him.

Sir Thomas ftopped her, "For God's fake," cried he, "act with prudence ; confider, if your father fhould find you thus, what will be the confequence.—He will infult me ; and, in defpite of my affection,

put

put it out of my power to act by you with honour.""

No intreaties or arguments could prevail with Sophia. Sir Thomas, therefore, to screen himself from detection, placed her in the chair, and running to the door, took out the key and locked it on the outside, leaving her to contemplate alone the horrors of her situation.

Sir Thomas now desired the man to inform Mr. Bridport, if he asked for his daughter, that she was not there.

The man did as directed, and Bridport departed.

Sir Thomas next turned his attention on the most advisable steps to be pursued; knowing the danger he should incur if he permitted her to return, and having a strong desire to retain her in his possession as a mistress, he determined on

conveying her to Mrs. Gripe, ſhe being the moſt likely perſon to countenance ſuch a procedure.

Having reſolved upon this plan, he again viſited Sophia, informed her that her father was gone, and endeavoured by every ſpecious argument he could make uſe of, to gain her conſent for remaining with him.

Sophia looked on ſuch a propoſal with horror; threw herſelf on her knees before him; pleaded the diſtreſs her father would ſuffer, and ſtrongly reprobated the infamy of ſuch a proceeding.

Sir Thomas, finding all entreaty uſeleſs, endeavoured to prevail on her to accept of ſome refreſhment.

This ſhe refuſed, but he would admit of no denial, and therefore locked her up again in the apartment, while he went

for ſome wine; and having returned with a bottle and two glaſſes, he had the addreſs to put into the glaſs deſigned for her a quantity of opium, and filled it up with wine; then pouring out a glaſs for himſelf, he wiſhed it might be the laſt he drank, if he did not mean to deal with honour by her.

He now inſiſted on her taking her glaſs, but was not able to prevail on her; at length, partly by force, ſhe was compelled to drink it.

The ſenſe of her ſituation prevented the opium from operating for a conſiderable time, till at laſt ſhe was overpowered by it, and ſunk on the chair.

Now was the time Sir Thomas deſigned to forward his plan.

He deſired William to get his chariot ready, if poſſible, without the knowledge

of any one, and drive to the back of the garden, there to wait his coming.

William having obeyed the order, Sir Thomas took up Sophia in his arms, conveyed her down ſtairs and through the garden, without being obſerved, as the evening was advanced, and all the ſhutters cloſed.

Having reached the chariot, he put her in, and deſired William to drive to Mrs. Gripe's.

So large a doſe of opium had he given her, that ſhe never awoke till the enſuing morning, when ſhe found herſelf undreſt, in bed, and Sir Thomas laying by her ſide.

He had intended, after conveying her to Mrs. Gripe's, to return home, but when he beheld her in bed, lovely in the arms of ſleep, he could not prevail upon himſelf

ſelf to leave her; he likewiſe conſidered it would afford him an opportunity of endeavouring to reconcile her to her ſituation.

She ſaw plainly that ſhe was not in Sir Thomas's houſe, every room of which ſhe was well acquainted with.

She beheld her betrayer by her ſide, in whoſe power ſhe now was, and with whom all reſiſtance would be futile.

The idea of what her father muſt be ſuffering during her abſence tortured her already diſtracted mind, and no relief was left her but her tears.

Sir Thomas kiſſed them away, and throwing his arms around her, preſt her to his heart.

She ſcreamed at his touch, but it was all uſeleſs, ſhe was completely within his power, and in a houſe where no relief could reach her.

Thus was Sophia loſt, while her raviſher triumphed in his ſucceſs.

About twelve o'clock in the day, Sir Thomas, having left ſtrict orders with Mrs. Gripe to prevent the eſcape of Sophia, returned to his houſe.

Bridport had been twice there the preceding evening, and from a gardener had learnt that his daughter was ſeen to enter in the day, but he could gain no further intelligence.

He never attempted to take repoſe that night, but early in the morning again viſited the houſe, and was there when Sir Thomas made his appearance.

CHAP. XI.

BRIDPORT in an angry tone demanded of him where he had fequeftered his daughter.

Sir Thomas affected to be furprifed at the queftion, declared that he walked with her only to the fide of the road, where he parted from her, as fhe informed him fhe was going to Briftol.

"Villain!" cried Bridport, "'tis falfe!" and feizing him by the collar, infifted on his delivering her up.

Sir Thomas ftill vowed he knew nothing of her, till at length Bridport acquainted him with the intelligence he had received.

Sir Thomas finding it would be of no

ufe to deny it further, avowed that fhe had confented to live with him, and advifed him to make his mind eafy, as he fhould fettle a handfome annuity on her.

This infult tranfported Bridport to that degree, that he ftruck him down with a crab ftick he had in his hand.

The fervant's hearing a fcuffle came in and feparated them.

Sir Thomas vowed to be revenged for the blow, and rufhing out of the houfe, while the fervants prevented Bridport from following, he left the unhappy father to bewail the lofs of his daughter, and to dread the refentment of her feducer.

Sir Thomas was not long before he put his threats in execution; he waited on his lawyer, and defired him to put the warrant of attorney in force that

Bridport had given him, nor did he ſtop here, but laid a plan for the purpoſe of totally ruining him.

The chief articles that were ſeized by virtue of the warrant of attorney conſiſted of hay and corn.

He made it a condition of ſale that the lots ſhould be cleared away in one week; which was a taſk extremely difficult to undertake.

He likewiſe made it a condition that the purchaſe money ſhould be immediately paid down.

Theſe conditions rendered the ſtock of little value, no perſons thought it worth their attention to purchaſe, unleſs they could obtain the lots for a trifle.

The auctioneer did not dwell on the articles, the ſtock therefore was ſold for

one

one third of its value, and the leafes were bought in by Sir Thomas.

Thus was Bridport totally ruined; and in lefs than three days from the fale he was arrefted at the fuit of Sir Thomas for arrears of rent, as before mentioned.

Sir Thomas carefully kept the knowledge of this circumftance from Sophia.

She had no opportunity of going out, not being permitted to leave her room, or fpeak to any perfon but Mrs. Gripe, who had received her inftructions to be filent.

Sir Thomas finding Sophia was growing extremely weak, and wafting every day, thought a change of air might render her a fervice, he therefore difpatched a trufty fervant to engage a houfe near Reading, which had been

advertifed

advertiſed to be let, deſiring him to agree for it in a borrowed name, as he did not wiſh to have the intruſion of company, and fixed on that of Thomſon.

Thither he removed Sophia in the ſame manner as he had conveyed her to Mrs. Gripe's, travelling all the night; nor did ſhe know of her removal till the enſuing day, when ſhe found herſelf cloſely guarded by different perſons of Mrs. Gripe's recommendation; wretches who, for the ſake of receiving double pay, would perform the moſt ſervile or villanous offices.

It was not the change of air that could reinſtate the health of Sophia; ſhe was feelingly alive to the ſituation he had placed her in, and in which he ſtill forcibly detained her; ſhe was likewiſe conſtantly in tears reſpecting her father, and

earneſtly

earneſtly entreated that ſhe might be permitted to ſee him.

Sir Thomas, to eaſe her mind, wrote to Bridport in priſon, and ſent the letter by a truſty ſervant, offering him his diſcharge, and to reinſtate him in his farms, if he would approve of his daughter's conduct, and ſignify as much to her in writing.

The virtuous heart of Bridport ſcorned to accept of this propoſal; he kept the letter for the purpoſe of expoſing Sir Thomas, but returned an anſwer to him ſuitable to the inſult offered.

Sir Thomas, on the receipt of this, finding it would not be in his power to effect a reconciliation with her father, informed her that he had received intelligence he was well in health a few

weeks

weeks back, but that he had ſince died of an apoplectic fit, thereby meaning to inſinuate that grief had not haſtened his diſſolution.

Sophia believed the report of his death, but did not imagine it happened as he deſcribed.

She knew her father's extreme partiality for her, and concluded her apparent miſconduct had been the means of ſhortening his exiſtence.

This idea, in addition to every other, deprived her of reſt, of appetite, and at length threw her on a bed of ſickneſs.

Sir Thomas had mentioned the death of her father, as it would put it out of her power to entreat for an interview; and having frequently ſworn to the truth of it, could not af erwards recede.

Sir Thomas paid every attention to her

for

for a confiderable time, and in all probability would have continued fo to do, had not Sophia repeatedly requefted his abfence.

When he waited on her with medicine, and endeavoured to prevail on her to take it, fhe would fay, "Ah, Sir Thomas, why is it you wifh me to recover? it is but that you may have an opportunity of renewing your improper conduct, at the expence of the little peace of mind you have left me. I am confident if you would withdraw from the houfe, I fhould get better; your prefence only reminds me of the paft, and adds to my wretchednefs."

Such language as this being frequently made ufe of, he at length concluded it would be the moft advifeable plan.

Sophia had likewife loft many of her

attractions; ſhe had become thin, pale, and emaciated.

Her eyes, once ſo pleaſing, had now loſt their luſtre; ſhe appeared, therefore, no longer an object of deſire.

Her complaints, which conveyed a reproach to Sir Thomas, were extremely irkſome to his nature; and this, perhaps, in addition to the reſt, haſtened his departure.

He had alſo an occaſion to viſit his eſtate, and likewiſe to ſettle the terms with Sir Charles for a large ſcope of land which was detached from his own, but which lay contiguous.

He therefore left her in the care of his houſe-keeper, giving ſtrict order to pay her every attention, and if ſhe ſhould recover, not to admit her out of her ſight.

The firſt place he viſited was Mrs.

Gripe's,

Gripe's, to whom he reprefented how he had acted; after which he went to his houfe, where he was fcarcely feated before the old man who had witneffed the ruin of Sophia made his appearance, and feverely reproached him for his conduct to Bridport, requefting likewife to know what was become of his daughter.

Sir Thomas, whofe fears obliged him to treat this man with civility, had the addrefs to perfuade him that Sophia, in confequence of his conduct on that day, refufed to accept his hand, notwithftanding his earneft entreaty, and that his affection had prompted him to retain her in his poffeffion, till fhe fhould be inclined to accept his propofal.

Refpecting her father, he endeavoured to excufe himfelf on account of the blow

he

he had received, alleging that ſuch treatment no gentleman could endure, and that he merited his reſentment.

He further declared his enmity would long ſince have ceaſed, had he conducted himſelf as a parent; that he wrote to him offering him his diſcharge, and to reinſtate him in his farms, if he would overlook what was paſt, and prevail on his daughter to accept his hand; that in return he received from him an inſolent reply, refuſing his conſent, and execrating his propoſal.

To impreſs the truth of this on the man's mind, he ſhewed two or three lines in the letter which beſt ſuited his purpoſe.

This effectually impoſed on him, and ſilenced his reproaches.

Having thus ſatisfied the man and lulled his fears to reſt, he made himſelf perfectly ſatisfied concerning the fate of Bridport; and being removed from Sophia, again purſued his vicious courſes without remorſe of conſcience, or the ſmalleſt idea that there muſt come a day of retribution.

In this ſituation ſtood the concerns of Sir Thomas, when Somers met him at the cottage, and reproached him with a part of what had come to his knowledge concerning this infamous tranſaction.

No ſooner, therefore, did Bridport make his appearance at Cliffdown-lodge, than Somers welcomed him with the cordiality of a friend.

Bridport expreſſed his gratitude for the favours he had received when in priſon,

and

and more particularly for the well-timed interference of Somers, which had been the means of procuring his difcharge.

He next advifed with Somers refpecting the moft convenient time to wait on Sir Charles, and thank him for his liberality.

"That tafk," replied Somers, "I will take upon myfelf.—Sir Charles is engaged with company, and cannot attend to you."

Somers knew that Sir Thomas was there, and feared the confequences of a meeting between Bridport and him, left the former, tranfported by rage, fhould act in fuch a manner as to throw himfelf again into the power of the latter.

Bridport thanked him for his offer, but requefted that he might be allowed, at fome future period, when it was conve-

nient, to teſtify his acknowledgments in perſon.

Somers aſked him if he had fixt on any plan for his future exiſtence.

Bridport replied, that as yet he had not decided on any thing reſpecting it, as it was his determination firſt to ſearch for his daughter. "If," ſaid he, "I had once again my child in my arms, I would labour with pleaſure as a huſbandman for her ſupport, and think myſelf happy; as I am confident, from the virtuous education ſhe received, ſhe cannot approve of the way of life into which, I fear, he has introduced her."

Somers then acquainted him with the information he had received from Freeman of her reſidence, and the name ſhe had taken.

The fond and anxious parent could

ſcarcely

ſcarcely be prevailed upon to take any refreſhment, ſo great was his haſte to be gone in ſearch of her.

During the time he was taking a cup of coffee, Somers related to him the death of Mrs. Bentley, and the circumſtances that led to it; as likewiſe the ſuſpicion he had concerning Sir Thomas being the cauſe.

This Bridport treaſured up in his mind for the purpoſe of relating to his daughter, provided ſhe had the leaſt inclination to remain with her ſeducer; then taking up his hat, was preparing to depart.

Somers inſiſted on his acquainting him with what money he ſtood poſſeſſed of, leſt he ſhould not have a ſufficient ſum by him to perform his journey.

Bridport replied that he had five guineas and ſome ſilver, which he had been able

to ſave out of the money he ſo generouſly tranſmitted to him; which ſum, with frugality, would be ſufficient.

Somers thought otherwiſe, and gave him a ten-pound note, deſiring him, if he ſhould be fortunate enough to ſucceed in finding her, that he would immediately return to his houſe, which ſhould be at their ſervice, till ſome future plan of exiſtence was adopted.

Bridport thanked him, preſſed his hand, while his tears beſpoke the gratitude he could not utter, and inſtantly departed.

Somers, having given orders reſpecting Mrs. Bentley's funeral, ſpent great part of the day at home, ruminating on the ſcenes which had preſented themſelves to him during the preceding week, and wearying his ſpirits with anxious

thoughts concerning Theodore and Clariffa.

This naturally recalled to his mind the fituation of Augufta.

He had left her unwell, and had promifed to convey to her any intelligence he might obtain concerning them, and therefore concluded fhe muft be in a ftate of equal anxiety.

He likewife knew that Freeman had been compelled to leave the houfe, without being permitted to fee her, this he alfo imagined muft add to her uneafinefs.

For thefe reafons he conceived, that notwithftanding he had no pleafing intelligence to convey, ftill a vifit from him would be a fmall relief, and afford him an opportunity for pleading the neceffity of fortitude, and advifing her to look forward with a more pleafing hope.

Somers had, likewife, another motive in his intended vifit.

He thought if he could meet Sir Thomas alone, that by repeating the effects of his vicious courfes, together with the relation of Mrs. Bentley's death, it might poffibly have fome effect on him, at leaft he confidered it worth the trial.

Having dined, he left his houfe for the purpofe of putting his intentions in practice.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

SOMERS had not walked far before he beheld Sir Thomas, and approached towards him.

He knew from experience, that by accoſting him as heretofore, was not the moſt probable method to make an impreſſion on a mind ſo hardened as his.

He had likewiſe conceived an idea which he wanted to put in practice, and for this purpoſe addreſſed him with every appearance of friendſhip.

Sir Thomas, in return, enquired with apparent anxiety, if he had gained any intelligence of Clariſſa.

Somers replied in the negative, and added, " I am ſurpriſed, Sir Thomas, at

hearing ſuch a queſtion from you, as I confeſs, I have hitherto thought you the moſt likely perſon to know where ſhe is.—If I am wrong, have the goodneſs to pardon my ſuſpicions."

Sir Thomas proteſted his innocence, and Somers affected to believe it.

"I am not the only perſon," reſumed Somers, "who had this ſuſpicion, as Mrs. Bentley was of the ſame opinion. It is my purpoſe," continued he, "to viſit the cottage this afternoon, and if you will accompany me there, I will thank you.

"You will then have an opportunity of aſſerting your innocence before her."

"As it is your wiſh," replied Sir Thomas, "I will certainly attend you, and you may depend upon it I will ſet her heart at reſt."

Somers, at this laſt expreſſion, heaved ſigh,

ſigh, and proceeded towards the cottage.

When he reached the ferry, he frowned on the ferryman, and placed his finger on his lips, thereby ſignifying he wiſhed him to be ſilent.

The man obſerved him, and took the hint.

When they arrived at the cottage he obſerved the ſame conduct towards the woman, and beckoning to Sir Thomas, they proceeded up ſtairs.

The firſt object that attracted their notice, was the corpſe of Mrs. Bentley, lying in a coffin covered with black, the lid ſtanding by its ſide.

Sir Thomas ſtarted back, and turned pale.

"There is nothing to fear," cried Somers; "it is now a piece of lifeleſs clay;

and when you reflect, if what you have afferted be true, concerning your innocence, that you have not been guilty of this murder, it muft afford you a comfortable confolation.—But what muft that man be, who, by the infamy of his conduct, has deprived this poor woman of exiftence? Confefs, Sir Thomas, is he not a monfter?"

"I muft be gone," cried Sir Thomas; "there is fomething in death fo fhocking to my nature, that I cannot endure the fight of it."

"And why not?" refumed Somers. "Are you a man and a chriftian? If you are, why fhould death appear awful to you?

"When a good man views a fcene like this, his foul will naturally be lifted upwards, while he prefents a petition to his

his God.—But the bad man will tremble at the ſight; 'twill be dreadful to his nature, as it muſt remind him of the period when he will receive a puniſhment for his crimes.

"The man who is engaged in the purſuit of vicious courſes, and, protected by his fortune, eſcapes the rigour of the law, thinks all is ſafe with him, till a ſcene like this preſents itſelf; this muſt recal to his mind the infamy of his conduct, and aſſure him the day of retribution will come.—How happy would he then be, if he could rid his conſcience of one crime!"

"Mr. Somers," ſaid Sir Thomas, "you addreſs your converſation in a manner that leads me to ſuppoſe, you imagine me the vicious character you have been deſcribing.

"It

"It is true, I took Sophia Bridport into keeping, and perhaps carried my refentment too far refpecting her father; but with refpect to being accountable for this poor woman's death, I affure you I am not, as I have no knowledge, whatever, of Clariffa."

"Sir Thomas," replied Somers, "if a fcene like this will not force a confeffion from your lips, yet permit me to hope it will fo far imprefs your mind, as to make you relinquifh putting your defigns in practice, provided it is as I have ftrong reafons to fufpect; reftore her to my care, and I will place her in fome family where fhe will receive protection, and continue to be an ornament to her fex.—On the other hand, purfue your prefent plan, you will then, for the fatiffaction of a momentary enjoyment, plunge

her

her into difgrace and mifery, and entail eternal wretchednefs on yourfelf."

"If I really knew any thing of Clariffa," replied Sir Thomas, "I might poffibly attend to your advice, but as it is otherwife, you are but wafting your words.

"I will no longer witnefs this fcene," continued he, approaching the door, "therefore, fhall wifh you a pleafant evening."

Somers followed him.

Little paffed between them till they had recroffed the ferry, when Sir Thomas, who had got rid of the awful fpectacle, and affumed a trifling degree of falfe courage, exclaimed, "Upon my foul, Somers, you are a capital parfon.—It is a pity, for the fake of the community in general, that you do not turn methodift

preacher;

preacher; you would look wondrous well mounted in a ſecond floor, or perked upon a table in a country village, haranguing your itinerant hearers: would any perſon believe you could have made ſo elaborate a diſcourſe over the mouldering carcaſe of an old woman?"

"Sir Thomas," returned Somers, "I do not believe you are ſo bad as you pretend."

"This is only the effects of falſe pride; you are aſhamed that any ſcene, however awful, ſhould affect you; and, like the children in the dark, 'ſing out to fright the devil:' fooliſh attempt! as if you could eſcape your own reflections by ill-timed raillery."

Somers was right in his conjecture, as was evident by his reply.

"Faith," cried he, "if you will not

ſet up methodiſt preacher, you muſt turn conjuror, for to tell you the truth, I did not half like that curſed queer ſcene you introduced me to.

"The old cat had her eyes open, and ſeemed to look at me as much as to ſay, 'You are there, are you?' but I could have replied with Macbeth, 'Thou can'ſt not ſay 'twas I did it!'"

"That I believe," rejoined Somers, "and with equal truth."

"At it again!" cried Sir Thomas; "you put me in mind of a blind beggar who never alters his tune for twenty years together."

Having arrived at Sir Charles's, Ellen, who obſerved Somers approaching, informed him that her miſtreſs wiſhed to ſpeak with him.

Somers followed her to a ſmall parlour, a

to

to which place ſhe had retired for the purpoſe of avoiding Sir Thomas, alleging that ſhe was too unwell to remain in the company of a ſtranger.

Auguſta roſe on his entering the room, and eagerly enquired if he had heard of Theodore.

Somers replied he had not been able to gain any intelligence of him.

Auguſta, whoſe heart was oppreſt through a variety of circumſtances, could not refrain from ſhedding a tear. "Mr. Somers," ſaid ſhe, "I hope you will excuſe me for troubling you with what oppreſſes me; but you ſeem to act and feel for me as a parent, a brother, and a friend; I will therefore throw off all reſerve before you, and make you acquainted with the ſtate of mind in which I am, and the principal occaſion of it; truſting you

will advife with me on what fteps are beft to be purfued.

"I feel," continued fhe, "that Theodore is neceffary to my happinefs.

"At the fame time, I am aware that my father would execrate any propofal, he might make, unlefs his family and fortune were equivalent to mine.

"Have you, therefore, ever heard from Theodore, or from the perfon who came from London, that his expectations are fuch, as when explained, would entitle him to expect my father's confent?"

Somers replied that he knew of nothing but what fell from the lips of Theodore, which was, that he could prove himfelf upon an equality with her, if required; "and this teftimony," added Somers, "was partly corroborated by the meffenger from London."

"Thus

"Thus far," resumed Augusta, "Theodore informed me; and would have made me acquainted with who he was, but that I was blinded by resentment in consequence of the false intelligence I received."

Somers assured her his opinion of Theodore was so firmly grounded, that she might with safety rely on the truth of his assertions.

"Then," rejoined Augusta, "nothing shall make me alter my sentiments in his favour."

She next enquired concerning Freeman and Clarissa, and received from him all the intelligence he had to convey, as likewise his various suggestions, which materially added to the depression of her spirits.

"I will now," resumed Augusta, "inform

form you what has paſſed during your abſence.

"Early this morning my father viſited me, and after making uſe of ſeveral invectives againſt Edward, for the deception he had practiſed, declared that he ſhould find I was not ſo deſtitute, but could be married to his ſuperior, a gentleman he had ſelected for me, who, ſetting aſide a few youthful follies, was really a worthy character, poſſeſſed a large eſtate unincumbered, and whoſe penetration and good ſenſe were ſuperior to every one he had before been acquainted with.

"I liſtened," continued Auguſta, "to theſe, and a variety of other flattering eulogiums, without having a conception of the perſon he alluded to, at length he named Sir Thomas Blandford."

"You ſurpriſe me," cried Somers: "I

ſhould

ſhould have concluded his ideas were totally abſorbed in the iniquitous plan he has laid to ruin Clariſſa, and that he would have had no leiſure at preſent to have thought of an honourable courtſhip: but perhaps he has only mentioned this to deceive Sir Charles, without any intention of proſecuting it."

"I am of a contrary opinion," rejoined Auguſta; "for when he was giving Theodore an improper character, by ſaying he was catering for a wife and a miſtreſs at the ſame time, he was truly defining himſelf: beſides which, I have had ſufficient proof of what I advance. My father further acquainted me that he had ſolicited for leave to pay his addreſſes, which leave he had given him, and that he ſhould exert his authority as a parent in ſeeing it carried into effect.

"This propofal," continued Augufta, "which I had no reafon to expect, and which at all times, fince his character has been delineated, would have been difgufting to me, is rendered more particularly fo at prefent, in confequence of my fentiments in behalf of Theodore, a perfon fo totally different from Sir Thomas, fo tender, fo refpectful, and in fact fo much fuited to my own difpofition, that it makes me view his oppofite with horror."

"What reply," refumed Somers, "did you make to your father on the receipt of this?"

"I declared," replied Augufta, "that it was impoffible for me even to refpect him, much lefs to liften to a propofal from him; on which my father, with a fneer on his countenance that I had never before

before experienced, added, 'We will fee whether you or I ſhall be able to conquer,' and immediately left me to reflect on what he had ſaid, in which ſituation I remained till ſummoned to breakfaſt.

"It was my intention to have retired from the breakfaſt parlour as early as I could with propriety; but my father, perhaps ſuſpecting my intentions, aroſe before I thought he had finiſhed, and deſired I would remain there till he returned. This," continued ſhe, "was evidently done to afford Sir Thomas an opportunity of paying his fulſome addreſſes, for no ſooner had my father left the room, than he began by ſtating, that from the firſt moment he beheld me, his heart had been enſlaved by my beauty, accompliſhments, and a variety of ſuch flattering encomiums, too groſs for me to follow; he then

took

took a review of the conduct obferved by you, which he declared was dictated by the mere effufions of your own fancy, and purpofely invented to calumniate him in the eyes of my father, as you fufpected he had formed an attachment for me, and thought by acting in this manner, it would remove every obftacle that might impede the progrefs of Theodore, who he had every reafon to believe had prefumed to infult me with his addreffes.

"I had determined," continued Augufta, "not to utter a fentence in reply; but he prevented me from following my plan, for after having finifhed his complimentary ftrain in my behalf, and exhaufted his invectives againft Theodore, he threw himfelf at my feet, again to plead his caufe, and had the affurance to feize my hand, which he forced to his lips; unable

to endure this, I ſtarted up, declaring that himſelf and his addreſſes were equally odious to me, and, deſiring I might never again be troubled with ſo contemptible a ſubject, left the room."

"When I conſider," ſaid Somers, "the character of the man, and his preſent purſuits, I think you acted perfectly right, and I hope ſuch a conduct on your part will prevent all further importunity on his."

"I wiſh I may find it ſo," rejoined Auguſta; "but I have every reaſon to ſuſpect otherwiſe.

"Scarcely had an hour elapſed from the time I had left Sir Thomas, before my father, who had evidently been informed of what had paſſed between us, entered the room where I was ſitting; he upbraided me for my conduct; proteſted by his

his Maker he would no longer be tortured by my petty excuſes or ill-place dattachments; declared he knew that I had fixed my heart upon a ſcoundrel who was little better, or perhaps worſe, than a highwayman; that Theodore had deceived you under ſpecious pretences, while he ran away with Clariſſa, the truth of which, he ſaid, would ſhortly appear; vowed if he could find him he would lay him in priſon as a vagabond; and highly blamed you for ſuffering your judgment to be impoſed on by ſo atrocious a character.

"This language," continued Auguſta, "forced a few words from me in favour of Theodore, which ſo greatly enraged my father, that I was fearful leſt he ſhould have ſtruck me; but I was happily relieved by the entrance of a ſervant who

 brought

brought two letters from London; one of them was for me, and the other for my father: theſe letters were from my aunt in London, ſtating that ſhe was unwell, that ſhe wiſhed much for my ſociety, and requeſted I would intercede with my father that I might be allowed immediately to viſit her, not doubting but the ſincere affection I had always manifeſted towards her, would prompt me to haſten my journey.

"I plainly diſcovered," continued Auguſta, "by the features of my father, that he was mortified on account of the invitation; he left the room without communicating the contents of his letter, or affording me an opportunity of aſking his approbation.

"From that time till dinner I was left to conjecture what would be his determination;

nation; but on entering the room, I beheld a total alteration in his countenance.

"He then acquainted me that I muſt prepare for my journey to London, and that he expected in a few weeks to be able to join me."

"I ſhould be inclined," ſaid Somers, "to think that this alteration in your father was brought about by the interference of Sir Thomas; can you inform me," continued he, "if your aunt is intimate with him?"

"I have ſeen Sir Thomas in her company," replied Auguſta, "two or three times at public places, but he was not in the habit of viſiting her; yet I have a dread upon my ſpirits leſt my father ſhould write to her, deſiring he may be admitted, and requeſting her to forward his ſuit; this would give me

great

great uneaſineſs, more particularly as he, to put her on her guard, would not fail to mention his ſuſpicions concerning Theodore, and by ſo doing ſubject me to continual ſcenes of mortification."

Somers adviſed her to obey the will of her father in every thing that laid in her power; but warned her not to give her hand where ſhe could not beſtow her heart.

"Then," replied Auguſta, "no one but Theodore will ever be entitled to it. I have now," continued ſhe, "one requeſt to aſk, which is, that you will not fail to correſpond with me by letter; and ſhould any intelligence reach you concerning either Theodore or Clariſſa, that I may be immediately appriſed of it."

Somers promiſed to fulfil her commands, and then informed her of Mrs.

Bentley's

Bentley's death, which drew a tear from the eye of Augusta, and an execration from her lips against him who had hastened the event.

Somers took leave of Augusta, and spent half an hour in general conversation with Sir Charles, after which he returned home to indulge his own private sorrows that preyed on his vitals, and was hourly hastening him towards his grave.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

T. Davison,
White-Friars.